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WRESTLIANA:

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF

ANCIENT AND MODERN

WRESTLING.

BY W. LITT,

AUTHOR OF "HENRY AND MARY."

[RE-PRINTED FROM THE WHITEHAVEN NEWS.]

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The following account of Ancient and Modern Wrestling is from the pen of the late Mr. William Litt, of Hensingham (father of Mr. William Litt, veterinary surgeon, of Shrewsbury.) It was first published in 1823. The low price at which the present publishers are enabled to reproduce the work, will, it is believed, ensure for it a large sale, especially amongst the class for whom it was originally intended, or, at all events, who will be best able to appreciate its merits, namely, the wrestling community.

September, 1860.

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WRESTLIANA.

HISTORICAL ANECDOTES OF WRESTLING, FROM THE REMOTEST ERA TO WHICH IT CAN BE TRACED, TO THE YEAR 1823.

In commencing with this part of our subject, we feel ourselves standing upon high ground. The first account we have of wrestling places it, in point of antiquity and respectability, not only the first, but infinitely superior to any other amusement at present prevalent in the whole world. For the truth of this assertion, we quote no anonymous author, whose authenticity might well be disputed; no heathen writer, whose idolatrous fancy might give birth to imaginary chimeras! No! the precedent we will quote was even anterior to such writers as we have described. It is one which no Christian can, or will, dispute: it is to be found in that book which treats of the creation of man, and the beginning of the world; authenticated by divine command, and written by that sacred and inspired historian, even Moses himself!

We find in the 23rd chapter of Genesis, that Jacob having passed his family over the brook Jabbok, was left alone. In its history of events at this early period of the world, with a brevity commensurate with its high importance, the Bible minutely relates only those particular occurrences which refer to some covenant, or promise, then made renewed, or fulfilled. It narrates facts, without commenting upon them. Therefore, although Jacob's wrestling with the angel was too remarkable an incident to be omitted, yet we are not told in what manner he came, nor of any preliminary conversation or agreement between them. It, however, appears very evident, that until the angel manifested his miracu-

lous power, Jacob believed his opponent was a mere mortal like himself; and on whichever side the proposal originated, it was acceded to by the other, either as a circumstance not unusual, or as an amicable amusement, which might be practised without the least infringement of cordiality. If it was not unusual, we are warranted in supposing it a common diversion antecedent to that period, and that Jacob was himself a scientific practiser of the art when he was the father of a large family. Nay, we might even hint, his celestial opponent was himself no stranger to that athletic amusement. If it then had its origin, no admirer of this athletic science can wish for one more ancient, or more honourable. That the patriarch's antagonist was a being of a superior order, and sent by divine authority, no Christian has ever yet disputed. That it was a corporeal struggle, or *bona fide*, a wrestling match between them, is universally admitted. It cannot, therefore, be denied that it is either of divine origin, or that a being more than mortal has participated in it. It is true, many of the commentators dwell upon it as a spiritual, as well as a corporeal struggle. This we are very ready to admit; but we will at the same time contend, that instead of diminishing, it adds considerably to its splendour. An amusement from which so many inferences and conclusions have been drawn to promote the welfare of Christianity cannot be either degrading, or confined in its nature; but, on the contrary, noble and scientific.

It is a common and received proverb, that "A man is known by his works, and a tree by its fruits." Here, then, is an amusement peculiarly chosen not only by one better, and greater than any man: but as if to give strength and firmness, combined with quickness and elasticity, to the limbs; discrimination and vigour to the body; coolness to the head, and perception to the mind: the whole forming an energetic combination of the whole power given to man. No exercise could have been selected, tending more to exalt his character, and from which such typical illustrations could have been deduced for his spiritual advantage. Here, then, we take our stand. Advocates for any other diversion, be it whatever it may,

can you produce an origin, either so ancient, or so honourable? Men of common sense, what can you object to it? Poets and lovers, ye who deal in heroics, and invoke ideal heathen divinities, or ascribe to a mere mortal like yourselves, the epithet, angelic, or even angel itself, while any proof you could bring forward in support of your imaginary divinities (or even the propriety of using such expressions) would be disputed, nay, condemned, by thousands of well-disposed Christians. In all that we have advanced respecting wrestling, none but heathens or atheists will attempt to confute.

Having proved the existence of this amusement at so remote an era, it would be neither necessary nor important to trace the practise of this art through that period of time which intervenes from the time of Jacob to the formation of the Grecian Republics. The blindness and transgressions of the Jews, and the barbarous ignorance of those nations whom God permitted to chastise them, render their exercises a matter of neither curiosity or utility. But when Greece, emerging from obscurity and ignorance, began to take the lead in civilization, in military knowledge, and in the cultivation of learning and sciences, the utility of public games, not only to infuse a generous and martial spirit into the minds of the young men, but to improve their bodily strength, was too apparent to be neglected. Accordingly we find these athletic exercises not only practised and encouraged in each particular state, but the highest honours and rewards bestowed on the victors at the Olympic, Nemean, and other games, where prizes were awarded, and contended for before the whole nation. It would be foreign to our purpose to quote the wrestling match of Hercules and Anteus, or anything bordering either on the fabulous or miraculous stories incidental to the times in which it is placed; but we may be allowed to observe that these prizes were contended for, and often won, by men distinguished as much by their birth, patriotism, and valour as by their skill in those exercises in which it was their pride to excel.

The influence of these sports in advancing Greece from a few petty states, not equal in extent of terri-

tory to one half of England alone, into the most powerful kingdom at that time in the world, is universally acknowledged by all historians and commentators who have ever treated of the subject. And it is singular to remark, that while the fact is admitted by all modern legislators, few, or none, have recommended an imitation of them. It is strange that Homer, who was perhaps the greatest poet that ever lived, and who himself had often witnesed the celebration of these games, has given us so confused, and even incomprehensible an account of the wrestling at the funeral of Patroclus, (though many years antecedent to his time,) between Telamon Ajax, the strongest, and Ulysses, the wisest man, in the Grecian army. Its translation by Pope is as follows:—

"The third bold game Achilles next demands
And calls the wrestlers to the level sands:
A massy tripod for the victor lies,
Of twice six oxen its reputed price;
And next, the loser's spirits to restore,
A female captive, valued but at four.
Scarce did the chief the vigourous strife propose,
When tower-like Ajax and Ulysses rose.
Amid the ring each nervous rival stands,
Embracing rigid with implicit hands;
Close lock'd above, their heads and arms are mixt;
Below, their planted feet, at distance fixt;
Like two strong rafters which the builder forms
Proof to the wintry winds and howling storms,
Their tops connected, but at wider space
Fixt on the centre stands their solid base.
Now to the grasp each manly body bends;
The humid sweat from every pore descends;
Their bones resound with blows; sides, shoulders, thighs,
Swell to each gripe, and bloody tumours rise.
Nor could Ulysses, for his art renown'd,
O'erturn the strength of Ajax on the ground;
Nor could the strength of Ajax overthrow
The watchful caution of his artful foe.
While the long strife e'en tir'd the lookers-on,
Thus to Ulysses spoke great Telamon:
Or let me lift thee, chief, or lift thou me:
Prove we our force, and Jove the rest decree.
"He said; and, straining, heav'd him off the ground
With matchless strength; that time Ulysses found
The strength t' evade, and where the nerves combine
His ankle struck: the giant fell supine;
Ulysses following, on his bosom lies;
Shouts of applause run rattling through the skies.
Ajax to lift, Ulysses next essays;
He barely stirr'd him, but he could not raise:
His knee lock'd fast, the foes attempt deny'd;
And grappling close, they tumble side by side."

This account seems as ridiculous, as it is incomprehensible to a modern wrestler—ridiculous, in regard to the duration of the contest, and the strange proposition of Ajax, and incomprehensible, as it appears Ulysses was the winner of the first fall; and the second was a disputed, or what is vulgarly termed, a dog fall. One thing, however, seems clear enough to us, that it was a bad wrestle; and though we imagine neither gained much honour by the struggle, both were sufficiently rewarded for it.

Although we could select from history a multitude of extracts to prove the estimation in which this and other athletic exercises were held from the time of Homer to the birth of Christ, and many hundred years posterior to that event, but as the bare establishment of the fact is not worth the recital, we shall therefore advert at once to instances of a more modern, yet still far distant period in the history of our own country, and the literature connected with it.

It appears that in the celebrated interview between Henry the Eighth of England and the French King Francis, which exceeded in magnificence and splendour any spectacle of modern times; wrestling was deemed the most manly and entertaining amusement then exhibited in the presence of these two mighty monarchs and their courts. A grand national and scientific display of this art took place between a number of champions selected from both nations, in which our countrymen were victorious. However, one mortified French historian pretends their king left better wrestlers at home than those who accompanied him! Countrymen assert that Francis himself was a most excellent wrestler, and in a contest between the two rival monarchs threw Henry with great violence. We will agree with the author in question, that the amusement was a princely one; but would either gladly believe there is some French gasconade as to the event of the contest, or wish our king had had practice and science enough to have introduced Francis to the same acquaintance with his mother earth, as his subjects.

Antecedently to this period, wrestling was a favourite amusement, as well among the nobility as

the yeomanry and inferior classes, the prize varying according to the rank of the combatants. At some particular times and places there appears to have been some acknowledged and customary prizes. These were usually a ram and a ring. Thus, in Coke's tale of Gamelyn, ascribed to Chaucer:—

> There happed to be there beside
> Tryed a wrestling;
> And therefore there was y-setten
> A ram and als a ring.

And likewise, at a still earlier period, we see in Ritson's Robin Hood:—

> ——— By a bridge was a wrestling,
> And there taryed was he.
> And there was all the best yemen
> Of all the west countrey.
> A full fayre game there was set up,
> A white bull up y-pight,
> A greater courser with saddle and brydle,
> With gold burnished full bryght;
> A papre of gloves, a red golde ringe,
> A pipe of wyne good fay;
> What man bereth him best I wis,
> The prize shall bear away.

In which the prize was still greater, being a white courser, well accoutred, a pair of gloves, a gold ring, and a pipe of wine.

It is rather a remarkable coincidence, that our modern Homer should have given nearly as lame an account of wrestling matches as his mighty predecessor. Thus we see in the fifth canto of the Lady of the Lake the following account of one:—

> "Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
> The manly wrestlers take their stand.
> Two o'er the rest superior rose,
> And proud demanded mightier foes,
> Nor called in vain; for Douglas came.
> For life is Hugh of Larbert lame,
> Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
> Whom senseless home his comrades bear.
> Prize of the wrestling match, the king
> To Douglas gave a golden ring."

In the first couplet, the method, viz. "hand to hand," seems introduced solely for the purpose of getting on; and certainly is not calculated to produce the dreadful consequences that ensue. In the second, all order is violated by the two last standers, instead of contesting the last fall, calling out for

fresh men. Nor are the remaining couplets less faulty, in regard to Douglas's treatment of his opponents, in the immense superiority of strength ascribed to him. The match between Bothwell and Burley, in the Scottish novels, is likewise one of the worst things in the whole series. It would have much gratified us, if a writer whom we so highly value had given us some better account of such contests, however cursorily introduced. But, alas! the baronet is probably no wrestler; and truly we are sorry for it.

We are likewise equally mortified to remark that the immortal Bard of Avon, in his comedy of "As You Like It," although he has combined in Orlando rank, character, and wrestling, tells us a truly pitiful, but dreadful and improbable story, concerning it. The justly celebrated James Hogg, the Etterick Shepherd, has, in his tales, occasionally introduced wrestling. And although we confess we do not exactly comprehend the fatality of Geordie Cochrane's heel-chip, yet we certainly think the wrestling between Polmood and Carmichael by far the best illustration of the art, either of ancient or modern date, we have met with. We will offer no apology for extracting it for the gratification of such of our readers as are not in the habit of perusing books of that description:—

"Sixteen then stripped themselves to try their skill in wrestling, and it having been enacted as a law, that he who won his any one contest was obliged to begin the next, Polmood was of course one of the number. They all engaged at once, by two and two, and eight of them having been consequently overthrown, the other eight next engaged by two and two, and four of these being cast, two couples only remained.

"Some of the nobles engaged were so expert at the exercise, and opposed to others so equal in strength and agility, that the contests were exceedingly equal and amusing. Some of them could not be cast until completely out of breath. It had always been observed, however, that Polmood and Carmichael threw their opponents with so much ease, that it appeared doubtful whether these opponents were serious in their exertions, or only making a sham wrestle; but when it turned out that they two stood the last, all were convinced that they were superior to the rest either in strength or skill. This was the last prize on the field, and on the last throw for that prize the victory of the day depended, which each of the

two champions was alike vehemently bent to reave from the grasp of the other. They eyed each other with looks askance, and with visible tokens of jealousy; rested for a minute or two, wiped their brows, and then closed. Carmichael was extremely hard to please of his hold, and caused his antagonist to lose his grip three or four times, and change his position. Polmood, was, however highly complaisant, although it appeared to every one beside, that Carmichael meant to take him at a disadvantage. At length they fell quiet; set their joints steadily, and began to move in a circular direction, watching each other's motions with great care. Carmichael ventured the first trip, and struck Polmood on the left heel with considerable dexterity. It never moved him; but in returning it, he forced in Carmichael's back with such a squeeze, that the by-standers affirmed they heard his ribs crash; whipped him lightly up in his arms, and threw him upon the ground with great violence, but seemingly with as much ease as if he had been a boy. The ladies screamed, and even the rest of the nobles doubted if the knight would rise again. He, however, jumped lightly up, and pretended to smile; but the words he uttered were scarcely articulate; his feelings at that moment may be better conceived than expressed. A squire who waited the king's commands then proclaimed Norman Hunter of Polmood the victor of the day, and consequently entitled, in all sporting parties, to take his place next to the king, until by other competitors deprived of that prerogative."

Although this account may not have much fact to recommend it, yet it is nevertheless apparent Mr. Hogg was conscious the practice was not uncommon among the Scottish nobility at that period; and that this was the case, might easily be proved by indisputable authority. At this period, it is worthy of remark, few discoveries of distant countries had taken place; and consequently the great landed proprietors spent much more of their time in their own countries and on their own estates. But no sooner had that ceased to be the case, than degeneracy and effeminacy crept in apace; and those exercises in which it had been the pride of their ancestors to excel, ceased; and from that time, few above the rank of yeoman chose to exhibit in a ring, either for their own pleasure, or that of others.

But we are now arrived at that period when the attention of most of the European nations, and particularly England, began to be as much directed to new discoveries, and consequent settlements abroad, as to the internal prosperity of the mother countries. This no doubt had its due effect upon the manners,

customs, and amusements of the people. Our immense acquisitions in America, and in Eastern and Western India, added to the great improvements in the art of gunnery, which rendered nugatory all previous modes of warfare, alike contributed to hasten the downfall of all athletic exercises among the higher ranks. The art of war became a more complicated science, gunnery, engineering, fortification, and all the minutiae of tactics attendant on these studies, became of proportionally more importance to men of rank, either in the civil, or military departments, than those exercises calculated to promote the display of personal strength, valour, or activity, as a well-aimed bullet made no distinction between Shaw, perhaps the bravest and most formidable warrior that fought at Waterloo, and the most effeminate dandy in any of the contending armies. Nay, "those vile guns" which the fop in Shakspeare alleges prevented him from "becoming a soldier," materially change the signification of the world *brave* itself, which *formerly* denoted the performance of great *personal* exploits, for which strength and activity were nearly as necessary as a cool head and intrepid heart; but *now*, a regiment which preserves its station amidst a shower of bullets till half of its number becomes "food for powder" is considered equally brave if composed of half grown lads, as if every man in it was a perfect Hercules. Indeed, the word still seems provincially to retain something of its former signification, when misapplied to what is generally termed the most ignorant of living things, or even to inanimate objects; as when we hear many a good old housewife say, this is a brave goose, or a brave pudding, meaning something excellent of its particular kind. In the proudest days of chivalry no exercise was so well adapted to enable king, lord, or knight, to excel in tilt or tournament, as wrestling, as in it were combined dexterity in personally coping with an antagonist, and the power of acquiring bodily vigour and stamina, so requisite for enabling the combatant to endure a protracted contest without detriment. Indeed, a quick and steady eye, for judging directions and distances in managing the

lance, might be better acquired by practising fencing or boxing; but we presume no high-born cavalier, even in these heroic days, deemed "a dislocation of ivory," or "a measure for a suit of mourning," any recommendation to "courtly dame" or "lady fair;" and as the smile of approving beauty has ever been deemed one of the proudest rewards for great achievements, we think the juvenile knights who endangered themselves for such recompense would take especial care no transformation of that kind should diminish the genuine brilliancy of that smile on which they were to subsist for a week and dream for a whole year! But the days of chivalry are gone; tilt or tournament is no more; the listed ring no longer boasts of patrician exhibitions; but still within it we view all the remains of that chivalric spirit which has distinguished the most celebrated conquerors in all ages, for, according to one of our justly-esteemed writers, had he been placed by Providence in a different station:—

> "He that the world subdued had been
> But the best wrestler on the green."

And we will venture to mention, that it is to that generous spirit of emulation which animates the wrestler to acquire celebrity in the ring, that we are indebted for the glorious victories of Agincourt, Trafalgar, Waterloo, &c. There are many who will argue that athletic sports have no direct tendency to inspire additional confidence and courage in the breast of the soldier on the day of battle; but we confidently aver, that all who assert this, speak without due consideration, for that such exercises will have their due effect even in the present mode of warfare, let us suppose the following case:—Let one individual, or any certain number of the most courageous men, be selected from the bravest regiment in Great Britain; let them all possess hearts that never knew fear, and bring them to the charge against the same number of men, equally disciplined, and all expert wrestlers, and what would be the unavoidable result? Might not one party say, I have only to parry the first onset of my antagonist, and close with him, and then victory is certain. I can in a moment dash him to the ground, and either kill

or take him prisoner at my pleasure. Would not the other naturally observe, this is not a fair contest; there are fearful odds against me? I meet a man whose sinews have gained additional strength by practising athletic exercises. If I charge him freely, a parry will enable him to close with me, and then I am inevitably gone. When men fight under these impressions the result cannot be doubtful. Again, are not the English superior to any other nation in the junction of active and passive courage? and is it not a fact that the French, during the late war frequently charged the troops of all the continental nations with whom they were engaged, with the bayonet; while they scarcely ever ventured to cross one with ours? Will any man imagine this had not some influence in regulating the tactics of the contending armies. In even a distant engagement under a heavy fire the British soldier might exclaim, "Notwithstanding they gall us now, they dare not stand our bayonets!" Supposing the case had been exactly *vice versa*, and they had had to observe, "We must endure this or run away, for we dare not come in close contact with them." Whether of these considerations let me ask, are better calculated to infuse courage, and inspire with hopes of victory, the boldest men on earth? The answer is too obvious to any man of common sense to require insertion. In the battle of Waterloo, the success of our cavalry when opposed to the French curassiers, a body of men confident in themselves, and of invincible courage, was principally occasioned by their superiority in the science of the sword, arising from the universal adoption of learning the proper use, or science of the stick. This practise owed its introduction to the circumstance of an Irish peasant thrashing with that weapon some of the best men in a celebrated regiment of horse, then quartered in the north of Ireland; and it would be absurd to suppose that superiority will not have its due effect in all future cavalry engagements.

Proceeding to a more modern date, let us now consider what effect religion has had upon athletic amusements, in Ireland, England, and Scotland. Of Ireland, we cannot from personal knowledge state

anything positive In England, particularly in the north, a great change has taken place within the last thirty years. Annual, and weekly exhibitions of wrestling, and foot-ball, usually took place on the Sunday afternoon, in the vicinity of every village in many parts of Cumberland. These practices are now very properly discontinued; partly by the inclosure of the commons and waste lands on which they were held, and partly by the interference of the clergy and magistrates. By the suppression of these meetings, and by the more strict attendance required of servants at this time, than was previously, opportunities for practising wrestling are become too confined to permit any number of that hardy class of men to excel in it. In Scotland the change has been great indeed. Before the reformation, almost every town and village had its great annual meeting for wrestling pitching the bar, &c.; but that great event, and the consequent troubles it occasioned, nearly obliterated everything in the shape of amusement; and nothing has yet revived except some little horseracing and archery; the latter of which seems calculated to promote nothing beneficial in the present times, either to themselves, their country, or posterity. The Roman Catholic religion is always accounted the most superstitious of any professed by Christians in the whole world. It is therefore natural to suppose that where that religion is most prevalent, less toleration will be allowed for amusements, particularly on the Sabbath. Yet strange to observe, the very reverse is the case. Thus in Ireland, Sunday afternoon is, in many places, generally devoted to cards, dancing, and visiting, and many other diversions. And in England, where we retain more of the rites and ceremonies of the Church of Rome, than they do in Scotland, amusements of all descriptions are much more prevalent; and greater relaxation in the rigid observance of the Sabbath, if not tolerated, is at least more customary than in that kingdom, where scarcely any are allowed.

As a proof that the practice of athletic exercises are not confined to this kingdom, or even to Europe, we quote the following account of an entertainment

given in the Island of Tongataboo, to Captain Cook in his third voyage to the Pacific Ocean :—

"While the natives were in expectation of this evening's exhibition, they engaged, for the greatest part of the afternoon, in wrestling and boxing. When a person is desirous of wrestling, he gives a challenge by crossing the groun in a kind of measured pace, and clapping smartly on the elbow joint of one arm, which is bent and sends forth a hollow sound. If no opponent steps forth he returns and sits down ; but if an antagonist appears, they meet with marks of the greatest goodnature, generally smiling, and deliberately adjusting the piece of cloth that is fastened round the waist. Then they lay hold of each other by this cloth, and he who succeeds in drawing his opponent to him, instantly endeavours to lift him on his breast, and throw him on his back ; and if he can turn round with him in that position two or three times before he throws him, he meets with great applause for his dexterity. If they are more equally matched, they quickly close, and attempt to throw each other by entwining their legs, or raising each other from the ground ; in which struggles they display an extraordinary exertion of strength. When one of them is thrown he immediately retires ; while the conqueror sits down for a minute, then rises, and goes to the side from which he came, where the victory is proclaimed aloud. After sitting for a short time, he rises again and challenges ; and if several antagonists appear he has the privilege of choosing which of them he pleases to engage with ; he may also, if he should throw his competitor, challenge again, till he himself is vanquished ; and then the people on the opposite side chant the song of victory in favour of their champion. It frequently happens, that five or six rise from each side, and gives challanges together ; so that it is not unusual to see several sets engaged on the field at the same time. They preserve great temper in this exercise, and leave the spot without the least displeasure in their countenances. When they find that they are too equally matched, they desist by mutual consent ; and if it does not clearly appear which of them has had the advantage, both sides proclaim the victory, and then they engage again. But no one, who has been vanquished, is permitted to engage a second time with the conqueror.

"Those who intend to box advance side-ways, changing the side at every pace, having one arm stretched out before, the other behind ; and holding in one hand a piece of cord, which they wrap closely about it, when they meet with an opponent. This is probably intended to prevent a dislocation of the hand or fingers. Their blows are dealt out with great quickness and activity, and are aimed principally at the head. They box equally well with either hand. One of their most dexterous blows is, to turn round on the heel, just after they have struck their adversary, and to give him another pretty violent blow with the other hand backwards. In boxing matches, unless a per-

son strikes his antagonist to the ground, they never sing the song of victory; which shows that this diversion is less approved among them than wrestling. Not only boys engage in both these amusements; but it not unfrequently happens, that little girls box with great obstinacy. On all these occasions, they do not consider it as any disgrace to be overcome; and the vanquished person sits down with as much indifference as if he had never been engaged. Some of our people contended with them in both exercises, but were generally worsted."

It does not seem reasonable that Captain Cook's men should have proved equal to these Islanders in exercises which require practice to become expert in; and probably not one of his crew was either a scientific wrestler or boxer. Had that been the case, notwithstanding their different mode of procuring hold, we have no doubt the result would have been in this instance, what it always has been, when British prowess has fairly and equally been brought into action:—nor would the superiority of a Belcher or a Cribb have been more conspicuous over these good natured Islanders, in the use of their fists, than the science of a Nicholson or a Richardson in vanquishing, even in their own manner of wrestling, the whole of their heroes in rotation. From the preference given to wrestling, it is evident the natives of Tongataboo considered it as the less hurtful and dangerous to the combatants; and affording equal, if not superior scope for the display of personal address, activity, and quickness.

We now come to a date so modern, that we will only observe, that previous to the year 1807, the best display of wrestling in this part of the kingdom was at Melmerby and Longwathby; two villages in Cumberland, but contiguous to Westmorland; where a silver cup was sometimes the reward of the victor. In that year a more considerable prize was given at Ambleside than had been previously known for a length of time. Throughout Cumberland and Westmorland the usual prize had dwindled to a leather strap, commonly called a belt; scarcely ever exceeding two or three shillings in value. But in that year an advertisement containing the offer of five guineas and a silver-mounted belt, to the victor, could not fail to excite an additional interest in the neighbourhood. This wrestling

at Ambleside was chiefly patronized by J. Wilson, Esq., of Elleray, a gentleman well known in the literary world, and we believe connected with a certain celebrated monthly publication. This gentleman was himself a proficient in athletic exercises, particularly leaping; but never sported his figure in the ring, we suppose for the same reason Alexander the Great assigned; which was, because his antagonists were not to equal rank. Be that as it will, the Ambleside wrestling, at least the five pounds five, rose and declined with him. After four years residence at Elleray Mr. Wilson went to reside in Edinburgh; and however liberal the gentlemen in the vicinity might be when influenced by his example, not one of them chose to succeed him in the superintendence of the business, and it consequently dropped. However as Mr. Wilson has again returned to Elleray, our good friends about Ambleside anticipate the pleasure of witnessing the revival of this favourite amusement.

But whatever interest the Ambleside wrestling might create, it was nothing in comparison to what was excited by an advertisement announcing that twenty guineas would be given to wrestle for at Carlisle Races the same year. This was effected solely by the interest and exertion of Henry Pearson, Esq. of Carlisle, a steady and invariable friend to that amusement; who by every possible means endeavoured to render it as gratifying and beneficial to the competitors, as attractive to the spectators, and who has proved himself on all occasions, as warm and disinterested a friend to the Carlisle wrestling, as Mr. Jackson is to pugilism in the metropolis. Under his patronage the wrestling became so attractive, that even the horses were deemed a secondary object. The higher classes who attended the races, including the Earl of Lonsdale, and many other distinguished characters, cheerfully, and liberally subscribed towards it. Eight guineas were given to the victor, and one guinea to the last loser. The victor was then debarred, and one chosen in his place to the fifteen last standers, and eleven guineas divided amongst them, the winner receiving five. In this manner the wrestling continued with great

eclat till the year 1815, when the last wrestle was not fairly contested. The dissatisfaction occasioned by this conduct, was further increased on wrestling over for the second prize, when the last men could not agree about the hold. In the year 1816, such universal disapprobation was expressed at the conduct of two or three of the last men, owing to some previous agreement amongst them, that Mr. Pearson did not think it right to give them the money. Owing to this, no contest took place for the second prize; but a silver cup was wrestled for in the circus, every spectator paying sixpence for admittance, but this was merely a speculation by the proprietor of the circus, and few gentlemen attended it. In the year 1817 no wrestling took place on the Swifts; but the proprietor of the circus gave prizes for two successive days. The wrestling now lay dormant for three years, and the races were in consequence so thinly attended, that it was deemed necessary to revive it. The estimation in which it was held was soon manifested by more than a double attendance compared with those years in which it was discontinued. Mr. Pearson was again the principal means of its renewal, and the patronage it has received in 1821 and 1822, is equal, or rather superior to what it ever experienced before. Its attraction now is universal. Ladies of distinguished rank, whose characters in every respect, are such as the breath of calumny has never dared to taint; have not only become spectators, but expressed their approbation of it; and the Carlisle wrestling is at this time in possession of higher patronage, and more general estimation, than any provincial amusement within the last two hundred years.

The only drawback upon the gratification the Carlisle wrestling has so generally afforded is, the confusion attending it, owing to the want of some regular and acknowledged mode of proceeding, which should be promptly and invariably acted upon. By this publication it is hoped these difficulties will in future be obviated. The author may without egotism observe, he ought to know as much about the subject as any man whatever; and the method recommended in a subsequent part of this

work is, in his opinion, the best calculated to give general satisfaction. He is well aware, that in a basis of this kind, it is impossible to please all; but he fully expects, the reasons he has given for adopting every particular rule, will induce all judicious and impartial men to prefer it to all others.

The circumstance of giving money at Ambleside and Carlisle had a considerable, and what seems rather strange, an injurious effect upon wrestling in general. Before that time a belt alone was the envied prize, and there wanted no stimulus but the honour of bearing it away to attract all the wrestlers in the vicinity: but when money was the cry, and it became so much the custom to subscribe for the wrestling, that a belt lost all its consequence and attraction, and of course, fewer meetings was the unavoidable result; for unless five or six, and in some places twenty or thirty times the value of a belt was subscribed, it was hooted at by the wrestlers. Nor was this the only evil. Money, in this, as in many other things, had the effect of causing dissention between those who gave and those who received it. The wrestlers began to fee each other, and a man's price was according to the estimation in which he was held as a wrestler; and it has frequently happened that several of the best wrestlers have divided the amount amongst them previous to the commencement of the sports, and refused to contend with each other.

A considerable prize to wrestle for was given at Penrith Races the same year the Carlisle meeting commenced. This was principally owing to Dr. Pearson, who in his youth had himself excelled in that exercise. After the first year it began to decrease, and finally died away. The Inglewood hunt and some other causes which might be assigned, prevented its flourishing as at Carlisle and Keswick, however last year some good wrestling was displayed there, and it may probably in a short time revive, and even exceed its original splendour.

In the metropolis wrestling has become a source of much attraction. A very elegant belt was formerly annually given to be contended for by natives of Cumberland and Westmorland. The prize is now

increased by the addition of valuable trinkets of different descriptions. In the vicinity of Whitehaven, the best wrestling was at Arlecdon Moor; but the inclosure of that common has now put a stop to it; and latterly, it has been more encouraged at Distington than any other place.

In the year 1818 the stewards of Keswick races gave three guineas to wrestle for. Its attraction was beyond all estimation, and the sum is now increased to fifteen; and report says it will at no distant period amount to twenty. That truly celebrated wrestler, Thomas Nicholson, has acted as umpire; and owing to his acknowledged judgment and impartiality, the Keswick wrestling has become second only in numbers and celebrity to that of Carlisle, and even superior to it, in the gratification it has afforded; as no disputes have hitherto arisen, of consequence enough to cast any shade upon its popularity.

Having brought down this concise history of wrestling to the present time, 1823, a few observations on the different modes of practising it will be expected by the generality of our readers. Without entering into any lengthy details, we must observe that ever since its institution the modes of wrestling have been as various as they are at this time in England and Ireland. In Greece, the back hold, as is the general practice in Cumberland and Westmorland; in Lancashire, and in the north of Ireland, collar and elbow, or waistband and elbow; in Devonshire, both collars, in Cornwall, where the combatants put on canvass jackets, enter the ring, and catch where they can; and in many places, hold of gloves, or the naked hand; were all in estimation. In some places we must observe, that the fall was not considered fair, unless one combatant threw the other fairly on his back without falling himself. Of all these modes, we must contend the arms round the body or shoulders, as practiced in Cumberland and Westmorland, is the best calculated, not only for preserving the combatants from accidents, but for affording greater and more equal scope for that display of dexterity and science which constitute the highest gratification of the spectators.

We know there are many, very many, who do not understand this noble art, differ widely from us, particularly as far as regards our second assertion, and characterise our mode as a mere trial of brutal strength; but as we will advance nothing but what we are fully prepared to defend, we will, with that candour and impartiality which ought to distinguish all writers on any science, state the reasons on which we ground our opinion, and leave our readers to judge for themselves.

It cannot, we think, be denied that it is the most noble and manly, and we will venture to say, the most Englishman-like manner of coping with an antagonist, to meet him breast to breast, and brave at once his united powers and science. It is comparatively like the courageous bull-dog which goes at once to the head of the bull; and the cowardly cur which nibbles at his heels. Besides, the closer you stand to your opponent, the sinews will be firmer braced, the whole frame more compact, and the limbs less liable to sustain any injury, when in the act of falling; and indeed that this is the case, is sufficiently proved from the paucity of accidents in this county, compared with what frequently happens in the south, where the looser holds are generally practiced.

We come now to the point where the strongest prejudices militate against us; but we trust a due consideration will materially reduce the strength of the objections so warmly urged against our Cumberland mode of wrestling. It never can be supposed to any rational man, that strength and weight, are not great advantages in any mode of wrestling and boxing; and consequently, that these, united with equal science and action, will generally produce victory. Now the ways of throwing at loose holds are very limited compared with the other; and of course the chances of the weaker man are fewer. A good striker, chipper, or hooker with the legs or feet, stands on no more than equal grounds with a more powerful antagonist, when contending with a loose, than a close hold. And in hipeing, cross-buttocking, striking with the knee, slipping from the breast, and even in throwing an opponent quite

over the head, modes regularly practised in close wrestling, the loose wrestler has no chance whatever. The reason of this is evident to any reflecting man; in one, the power and use of the breast, which is the very centre of strength and stamina in man, cannot be brought into action; and in the other, is in universal use. When a very powerful man grasps a light one, if he holds him at a distance, and does not make play, he may render him powerless, and never give him the shadow of a chance. But with his arms round his body or shoulders, the lighter man, by feeling or sustaining his weight upon his breast, may, with nearly an equal chance of success, assail him in some direction, for this great and decisive reason, the weight of a man is no comparative counterpoise to his strength, and consequently if the stronger man does not choose to exert his powers, his mere weight is no material drawback upon an antagonist who is at liberty to exert his own. Again, a man of tremendous power may by mere strength of arm dash a little man to the ground, as we will suppose Douglas did his antagonists; but it is a well-known fact, that a powerful unscientific man taking his opponent from the g ound in close holds, is the readiest way to lose the fall. For his opponent will, by hampering his knees or thighs, prevent his throwing him; meanwhile the close junction of their breasts, not only prevents the effectual use of superior strength, but even informs the defendant of every meditated arrangement, which his science will enable him to render futile, thus while the stronger is losing his wind (and wind is strength), his grasp will decline; this the other will proportionally gain; till at length obliged to set his adversary down, he is generally thrown in a moment. The fact of Cass, the victor at the last Carlisle races, a man weighing sixteen stone, having been thrown by Rogerson, a little tailor, scarcely nine; Richard Abbott, about eleven, winning the purse at Keswick races in 1821; and Watson, of Torpenhow, having twice thrown the powerful and celebrated Weightman, sufficiently establish the truth of the above remark.

It is true we sometimes witness a more powerful man force in the back of a weaker, but this is as much effected by art as strength; and rarely occurs even when strength is assisted by considerable science. The situation in which the parties are placed when they take an equal hold of each other, is a sufficient bar to strength effecting any such purpose when opposed to superior science; thus Weightman, assisted by seven inches in height, three stone of weight, and considerable science, could not force in the back of Watson; and such is the effect of science over strength, Rogerson has often been known to force men of thirteen stone weight on their knees!

We will likewise illustrate the advantages of close wrestling by the following fact:—In the height of our celebrity we were acquainted with an Irishman, who in his own country had carried everything before him at collar and elbow. He was five feet eleven inches high, more than fourteen stone weight, and one of the best made men in the kingdom. We must acknowledge he was so much our master at collar and elbow, as generally to gain two falls out of three, and sometimes four out of six; but with the superiority of strength and weight, with close holds, which he was as much accustomed to as we were to the other, he was a mere play-thing; nor could he ever rise superior to defeat in contending with a second-rate wrestler of ten stone, yet this man laughed at the idea of any twelve stone man in existence vanquishing him in his own mode of wrestling; and to corroborate this, we will venture a beef-steak and a bottle of porter, that if a dozen of the best loose-hold wrestlers in the kingdom be brought to the next Carlisle races, they will be thrown too easily to excite any interest; and if the trial be made, many of the Cumberland and Westmorland wrestlers will find them sufficient work in their own way.

In Sparta, three thousand years ago, we read that young women wrestled naked before assemblies of the people, and it was the general practice long after that time to besmear the bodies of the competitors with oil. In the early history of our own country

we likewise find it was customary to engage in athletic exercises with a very slight and sometimes without any covering. Wrestling, therefore, seems to be one of the few amusements in which we trace the gradual progress of science and civilization, without any diminution of gallant bearing or heroism in its performance. In preparing themselves for the contest, our modern wrestlers never encroach upon decorum so much, but that any lady may witness it without feeling her delicacy in the least danger of being wounded by it; and notwithstanding the Munchausen stories of its brutality and terrific consequences to those engaged, it is fifty to one against any accident of consequence occurring; and in fact this amusement will be found by all who are willing to receive proofs for prejudices, much less injurious, and more free from danger of bodily harm, than any other exercise whatever; but as this point will receive due consideration in its proper place, we will close this part of our subject, and proceed to compare wrestling with other amusements of the present day.

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISSERTATION ON WRESTLING, COMPARED WITH OTHER AMUSEMENTS OF THE PRESENT DAY.

As we will always contend that those exercises in which man alone is implicated must be the most truly noble and scientific in their nature, we will commence this part of our subject with comparing wrestling and pugilism; a sport which has for some time acquired the name of a science, and which all those who have read Boxiana, will not doubt has acquired most distinguished patronage amongst even nobility itself. But truly, in what manner it can be deemed to rival wrestling as an amusement, we are totally at a loss to imagine. It is true, its attraction is evinced by the immense crowds which collect to witness it, but its interest to many is the sum they are to gain or lose by the event, the fear of an interruption, the distance to, and difficulty of ascer-

taining the spot where the contest will actually take place, and the illegality of the thing itself, must all operate as drawbacks on the gratification derived from witnessing it. But these difficulties overcome, what follows? One single contest, or if you please, trial of skill; a short, or probably a protracted one, is generally the whole inducement. If the former, an overpowering superiority, want of game in one of the combatants, or a blow, if not fatal, so dreadful in its effects as to deprive the receiver of his recollection, and prevent his coming to time; all things in themselves incapable of exciting any sensation of pleasure in the spectators, are all that can be witnessed; if the latter, a succession of knock-down blows, and the bloody and disfigured appearance of the performers, must considerably alloy the gratification arising from their science and skill, and excite in every generous and humane breast, the strongest emotions of commiseration and pity for the pugilists. That this both is, and will be the case, we may confidently appeal to Boxiana itself, in all reports of what are termed sporting fights. To this source only can be traced what is called the humanity and consideration of Mr. Jackson, in collecting money to compensate the efforts, and reward the bravery, or to speak more correctly, the sufferings of the combatants. Again, while we admire the courageous spirit of the pugilist which leads him to acts of what may even in one sense be called heroism, we must admit that he is at the same time the hireling of gambling opinion; the being who by undergoing a course of training to enable him to exhibit himself more to the advantage of his, we had almost said owners, but backers is the term usually appropriated by the sporting world to his employers, degrades himself to the condition of the game-cock, the race-horse, or many other animals of the brute creation.

In fact, whatever attraction boxing may possess, the immense sums depending on any capital match between celebrated men will fully warrant us in asserting gambling to be one of the principal. And however friendly we may be to an exhibition with the gloves, acquiring the means of defence when at-

tacked, or additional power of repelling an unprovoked insult, we cannot, although a strenuous admirer of the eloquence of Mr. Egan, coalesce with him in his conclusions that professed pugilism has any tendency to prevent assassination, or to be in its nature a more equal, or manly manner, than sword or pistol of settling those disputes in which neither party can, without making the cure worse than the disease, appeal to the law. Assassination can never obtain any advocates for its support in a country renowned for the bravery of its inhabitants; and when we consider the great difference that may probably be in the age, make, and size of the parties who quarrel, we cannot hesitate to pronounce boxing inferior. A scientific man, or one so much superior to another in age, strength, or other advantages, as to put science out of the question, might insult him, and ridicule the idea of giving him satisfaction, if there were no alternative but boxing for it. But if the rank of the parties, and the spirit of the weaker, rendered such a result probable; a man however strong, or gifted with boxing requisites, might pause as much, or more so, before he insulted any fellow-creature however diminutive in person, as if he were his equal in every particular, as a bullet would make no distinction between them. We are no advocate for duelling, we even think the practice cannot be vindicated in a Christian country by any provocation; but if a man's feelings be so wounded that he will have satisfaction, we would advise him to prefer it either to assassination, or boxing a man who is morally certain to give him a severe thrashing.

We acknowledge we do not object to boxing when the parties consider themselves on a level, and which is the better man in that respect, is the cause of quarrel; and if a little science be displayed in bringing the matter to a conclusion, we own we like it the better, and fully coincide with Mr. Egan, that it is a much better way of settling such disputes, than having recourse to knives, sticks, or any other weapon whatever.

But professed pugilism is gambling. The men are brought to the ring, comparatively like oxen to the slaughter; but with this material difference,

one are brought to gratify the curiosity or gambling propensities of the public; the other for a more substantial and necessary motive, to fill their bellies!

It is asserted there are many praise-worthy characters, not only among the admirers of pugilism, but among the pugilists themselves. Admitting it to be the case, is it not a strange inconsistency in human nature, that men entitled to that character can find any amusement in witnessing what is supposed to be a good fight? We saw the battle between Carter and Oliver at Gretna Green, and we will extract from Boxiana a few particulars of it. As early as the fourth round we are informed, "the head of Oliver was terrifically hideous, the blood pouring down in torrents, his body and back completely scored with the ropes, occasioned by his struggles to resist the iron grasp of Carter, and to get away from that desperate fibbing punishment which has been so liberally administered to him by the superior strength of his opponent."

After fighting twenty more rounds in this situation, we are told "Oliver's head was so hideously disfigured that all former traces of it were gone; and Carter's nob a little altered from its originality." After these sublime specimens of attractive eloquence, eight more rounds are fought, and then comes the climax, which is word for word as follows:—"Nature had been pushed to the farthest extremity the human frame could bear, the vital powers were nearly extinct, defeat seemed to operate so much upon his mind that he fought till his pulse was hardly found to vibrate, and in the last six rounds, during which he had not the least shadow of a chance, he persevered till all recollection of the scene in which he had been so actively engaged had totally left him. In the thirty-second round he was taken out of the ring in a state of stupor, and completely deprived of vision, his body and back were shockingly lacerated all over, from his struggling so much upon the ropes; and, in point of fact, much as fighting men may have suffered in former battles, the situation to which Oliver was reduced, it appears, exceeded them all. The battle lasted forty-six minutes. He was taken and put to bed at Longtown, four miles from

the ring, and in consequence of the vast quantity of blood he had lost in the contest, added to his exhausted state, the surgeons who were called in to attend upon him deemed it highly dangerous he should be bled."

After these extracts the generality of our readers will be at a loss to imagine what constitutes the amusement at a prize fight. If Carter and Oliver relished it, the latter surely could not fail to be delighted in this instance, as he got perfectly satisfied. Carter likewise could not find any fault, yet he was supposed to have no great taste for "altered nobs" and such little particularities.

As for the spectators, those who won called it a good fight, and those who lost a bad one. The former therefore were well amused, and the latter found no amusement in it. The account of the fight is, with the exception of one particular, very correct; it was as early as the eleventh, and not in the twentieth round, that Oliver put in the tremendous body-blow which occasioned for two or three minutes the only delightful sensation his friends experienced during the whole contest. Previous to the act of closing, in many rounds there certainly was much science displayed by the combatants; and we do not hesitate to say, that Carter's quickness gave him a manifest superiority in that respect over his opponent, who, while he endeavoured to give greater effect to his blows, was too slow in delivering them, but when closed, it was the strength only of Carter which gave him the advantage. In point of throwing, nothing which could be called a cross-buttock occurred between them. Carter, indeed, did sometimes succeed in getting his left leg across both Oliver's, and dragging him over it; but to apply the term science to that part of the contest would be ridiculous.

But putting loss and gain out of the question, what great satisfaction could the impartial spectators derive from witnessing such spectacles as these quotations allude to? The fight we quote from, greatly resembles in its prominent features all those which are termed good fights. One of the men, and sometimes both, are obliged to be carried, or at least

supported out of the ring, and the next question that naturally occurs is, what cause induced them to come there? The fact is, there was no previous quarrel between the individuals in question; but Carter thought he could get two hundred guineas, and considerably advance his future prospects by beating Oliver; and Oliver entertained the same sentiments respecting Carter. The monied men differed in opinion what would be the result of such a meeting, and each party supposed they could afford that price out of the money they felt inclined to risk on the issue. Accordingly we are informed by Boxiana, that the backers of Carter presented him with fifty guineas in addition to the battle-money, which was two hundred more. These sums, and the expense of training would probably amount to three hundred pounds!

As for Oliver, Boxiana remarks "That Mr. Jackson was not at Carlisle, and it was observed, that the losing man was not the better for his absence;' which is tantamount to saying, Mr. Jackson was not present to have begged more money for him than his disappointed backers could probably afford. The attraction of modern pugilism, therefore, is either gambling, or the pleasure of witnessing two men beat each other till one of them can no longer meet him at the scratch. This is the true philosophical view of the subject, when fairly examined, and divested of the superficial adornments in which it is enveloped by its admirers.

Let us now revert to wrestling; and carefully scrutinizing it in the same manner we have done boxing, compare the two exercises together, and freely stating our own opinion, leave our readers at full liberty to form their own judgment. In witnessing a prize wrestled for, instead of one contest only, there are generally from thirty to forty, or sixty to eighty. Those, who by better fortune, or superior dexterity, throw their opponent the first time over, meet in the second a partial victor like themselves; and then "Greek meets Greek" in succession, till at length, all his competitors vanquished, either by himself or in rotation by those he has

thrown, the conqueror (like Alexander the Great) has no more to vanquish.

Our literary readers will immediately recognize in this amusement what is always allowed by critics and connoiseurs to constitute the highest gratification a spectator can experience. That piece only is considered perfect which progressively advances in interest till it arrives at the denouement; which evincing the same masterly genius, the satisfaction of the audience is complete. In this point of view, wrestling as an amusement stands unrivalled and alone. The spectator who knows no more of his own language when written or printed, than he does of Hebrew, fully demonstrates the truth of this assertion by the increased interest he feels in every succeeding round, till arrived at the last, that one fall interests him much more than any of the preceding. In this respect pugilism is so far from admitting of any comparison with wrestling, that even the single contest it dwindles to is very defective. The greatest interest it excites is at the commencement, when the men are in full vigour, and exerting all their science and action to obtain the first advantage. As the combat advances these become less obvious, blows and blood are more conspicious; and as they are fully expected as a matter of course, commiseration (a very singular kind of pleasure to court as an amusement) begins to supersede gratification; and when the fight terminates, that feeling is absorbed by pity for the loser in the breast of every spectator but those whose loss or gain make them callous to every feeling of humanity. Wrestling has never yet (at least in this country) become a subject of gambling speculation. The trifles sported by the spectators are never an object of much consideration; and neither commiseration nor pity, are at all likely to be excited by witnessing it. The wrestlers walk out of the ring as free from injury as when they entered it: and let us now make the same inquiry we did respecting the pugilists; what brings them there? We answer, a desire to rival the renown of former heroes! That generous and irresistible spirit of emulation which led knights to the princely tournament, and from

thence to signalize themselves in the service of their country. The wrestlers come like Orlando, "to prove the strength of their youth," and to convince the spectators that their science, spirit, and activity correspond with it.

If the wrestler meets an equal opponent, "chance may place the laurel on his head, or tear it from his brow;" if the former, his frame is advanced, the desire of further conquests inspires him with additional courage, and when he falls, he falls like some of Ossian's heroes, "with his fame around him." If the latter, uninjured in person, pocket, or character; what has a brave mind to regret? He has done his best. "Fortune," said the Prussian hero, "is a slippery jade, another time I shall do better." He came there the hireling of no one; he came like a free-born Englishman, to what characterizes a real English amusement, for his own gatification, and to contribute to that of others. As he probably never flattered himself with the hope of being ultimately victorious where so many contended, he may indeed have been foiled sooner than he expected, but defeat is certainly a strong expression for one so circumstanced. If he meet with an antagonist superior in strength or science, he is generally thrown; if that be the case, it is no more than he expected, and no stigma whatever is attached to the circumstance; on the contrary, he will often observe with much complacency, "I plagued him more than he expected," or, "it is an honour to be thrown by him." Should he chance to win the fall so much the better. If thrown by an inferior antagonist, he is laughed at by his friends, and vows "he will take better care another time," and that is the worst. In short, his observations may be as various as the situations which occasion them, and these equally so as the contests that must take place before a prize is won. To entertain a company, variety is always an auxiliary, often requisite, and sometimes indispensable. To constitute an amusement, uncertainty and expectation are two essential requisites; and these, unalloyed by any painful feeling, can alone produce gratification. In all these qualifications, wrestling is eminently superior to any other

amusement. The contests are many, and varied in their mode of termination. In single trials by men in full vigour, the result is sufficiently uncertain. Men distinguished by superior strength, or science, are certainly expected to win; as the victor will invariably be possessed of one or both of these qualifications, and any accidents likely to interrupt the satisfaction of the spectators will very rarely occur. In all these parallels, we presume few will be found to dispute the superiority of wrestling over boxing. If wrestling be called the mere act of one man throwing another down; the science displayed, and the manner of doing it, may reasonably be supposed to excite the interest, and gratify the curiosity of the spectators; and this we have always supposed constituted an amusement. But if on the same ground we call boxing the mere act of one man beating another till he is disfigured with blood, and unable to stand, although science may be displayed in the performance, yet we are compelled to acknowledge it is a barbarous act, and we envy not the feelings of those who find any amusement in it.

There are some wiseacres, who as if they had studied the means of furnishing other men with reasons for denominating them, pshaw! the word is an ugly one, and we will leave our readers to suppose what it is, will gravely inform you, that wrestling injures a man more than fighting. Should we ask these geniuses for reasons, we would probably receive such an answer as Falstaff gave when pressed for them: "What, upon compulsion! no; if reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason on compulsion." In many prizes the victor generally vanquishes five or six opponents, and probably wrestles some hundred falls within the year. In fighting, one opponent is generally sufficient for two or three months; and we would suppose one hundred a tolerable supply for any ordinary man. In wrestling, the man who is thrown is ready for another trial the next minute; in fighting, the beaten man has often more occasion for a chaise to convey him home, a doctor to prescribe for him, and a nurse for a week.

In science only, will boxing and wrestling admit

of any comparison: and were we to substitute five or seven throws for one, which is all that is allowed in contending for a prize, we believe it would be difficult to assign the superiority to either. But the limited duration of a single fall renders a momentary advantage often decisive, which in number, or in boxing, is in future guarded against; and strength and size regain a certain preponderance, according as they are united with, or opposed to, science and action. Thus Richard Abbot, weighing little more than eleven stone, who won the prize at Keswick in 1821, undoubtedly threw two or three men upwards of thirteen, with whom he would stand no manner of chance three falls out of five; but who ever dreamt that Dutch Sam, or Tom Belcher, though phenomena, could have beaten Jem Belcher, or the Game Chicken; or that the Nonpariel Randall, could beat Neat.

It may be urged that Dutch Sam beat several pugilists two stone above his own weight; and that Jem Belcher, under thirteen, beat Gamble, and was for some time the unrivalled champion of England. These instances, though convincing proofs of science and good manhood in boxing, do not entitle that exercise to claim any superiority over wrestling, in which such instances are by no means uncommon. If asked to produce them, we need only refer to Thomas Nicholson (about the weight of Jem Belcher) winning at Carlisle for three successive years; James Fawcett, about eleven, winning at Melmerby for seven years; or to the circumstance of Thomas Todd, about twelve stone, throwing last year at Carlisle John Fearon, of Gilcrux, weighing seventeen stone, who possessed science enough to throw the celebrated Weightman; and likewise John Liddle, fourteen stone, an acknowledged first-rate wrestler. Nor is there any doubt, but any of these men, and numerous others we could mention, would vanquish in any number of trials, men as far above their weight, and rating as high in point of science, as those beat by Sam Belcher, or any other pugilist whatever.

The means of acquiring perfection in boxing and wrestling are equal. We often find light weights comparatively the best in either exercise; and men

about thirteen, or between that and fourteen stone, the acknowledged champions; because these latter acquire science enough to throw, or beat lighter men, and are so much superior in that respect to very heavy men as to render a few stones of no great importance. It is true there may be some few exceptions but James Belcher, Henry Pearce, John Gully, and many others, are undeniable evidences of the truth of the remark on one side; and Thomas Nicholson, William Richardson, and with these celebrated names we might without egotism quote our own, on the other; all of whom no twelve stone man in the world was able to vanqnish, except by mere accident. We could with propriety quote many other names, both boxers and wrestlers to strengthen the remark, but the above are sufficient. The principle upon which this fact is grounded, is sufficiently clear and natural to those, who not content with a superficial knowledge. wish to examine the source it springs from. To arrive at the top of the tree in either wrestling or boxing, a complete knowledge of the science and varied and effective action are indispensably necessary; and neither of these requisites can possibly be acquired without practice of every description. What we mean by practice of every description is, practice with superiors, equals, and inferiors, both in respect of science and weight; and to form a complete master, such practice is absolutely necessary. It is easy for light weights, and not difficult for men of from thirteen to fourteen stone, to find opponents of all these descriptions; but very rare for those above that weight to find equals or superiors willing to engage with them and hence their deficiency in science and action; for in those critical moments either of attack or defence, when nice distinctions are not only necessary, but often decisive of a contest; that less than momentary recollection and scientific rapidity of action which has frequently been the means of winning and losing, and consequently with which one party is perfectly at home, is totally wanting in the other. Thus it is almost impossible a very heavy man can acquire the science and action of one above the middle size; but the insuperable bar is removed

between the latter and the light weights.

Having thus at considerable length defined the difference between wrestling and boxing, it will not be necessary to dwell much upon the former, in future comparisons. But before we entirely take leave of this part of the subject, we cannot help observing the great difficulty we unavoidably labour under, in adapting our language to the comprehension of one class of our readers, and the satisfaction of others · and, possibly, like the old man and his ass, by endeavouring to please everybody, we may please nobody, and give our labour into the bargain. There is likewise another difficulty which we have been compelled to submit to ; that is, in speaking of wrestlers and wrestling, we have often, to avoid repetition, been obliged to adopt the boxing phrases, such as combatants, vanquished, antagonists, &c. which, although generally used, are strictly applicable to those contests only in which two men oppose each other to extremity ; and therefore seem harsh when applied to an exercise like wrestling, in which men oppose each other for amusement.

Leaping and running are both exercises which admit of few comparisons. We do not wish to depreciate either; but to compare them as interesting amusements to wrestling would be ridiculous. It is certainly a desirable thing to outstrip our competitors in any exercise ; and therefore to excel in leaping has been an object of ambition to many ; but the interest it excites is comparatively small, as it is entirely destitute of any appendage to recommend it to the patronage of the public. It is also generally allowed to be more injurious to the frame than wrestling, owing to the great stress the act of springing necessarily imposes on the belly and intestines. As it is never classed among those which are deemed manly exercises, to dwell much upon it would be superfluous.

Running is an exercise which, like leaping, has been for some years gradually declining in Cumberland and Westmorland, a convincing proof of the little interest they are calculated to excite. In these counties they were formerly in considerable repute ; and till within these few years, (and sometimes yet)

a pair of gloves to leap for, and a hat to run for, were usually given at all petty races, cellar-openings, public bridals, fiddler wakes (commonly called hakes), annual sports, &c. where a belt to wrestle for was the principal attraction. Those who wished to attain any celebrity in running devoted much more time to prepare themselves for that performance, than is required to leap or wrestle; as it was usual to go through a course of training to prepre themselves for it. Running is, in itself, a thing perhaps more essentially useful to those who excel in it than leaping, or even wrestling itself; but as an amusement, either to those who practise it, or to spectators, vastly inferior to wrestling. It has, however, in all ages, and in many countries, been held in great repute; yet, notwithstanding, speed has latterly, in some places, been made a subject of gambling speculation; it is perhaps less practised at this present time than at any other period. In all exercises there is an object of competition. In running, that object is superior speed. Viewing leaping or running philosophically, the true state of the matter is simply this, the man who wins, and those who lose, perform exactly the same thing; but the victors leap a few inches farther, or run a certain distance, one, or perhaps a few moments sooner than those who lose. Neither exercise admits of much variety; a jump (the common substitute for leap in Cumberland) is a jump, and a race is a race; this the spectators know they must witness; and the sameness that pervades the whole is only varied by the uncertainty of winning. As we remarked before, those who do win perform nothing but the same thing the losers do, excepting what we before observed. In wrestling the case is quite reversed; the action is varied; and the winner stands, the loser falls. To sum up the difference of the three exercises at once, and to scrutinize leaping and running, as we have before done in regard to wrestling and boxing, we shall only observe, that horses and dogs can leap or run; but men only can wrestle.

Football is an exercise which has dwindled down to nothing, compared to the estimation in which it was formerly held. The Sabbath, though confessedly

an improper one, was the day on which it was generally practised. Villages, parishes, and frequently three or four united, opposed others annually on some particular Sunday afternoon; to carry away the ball from the scene of action to their own side of the county was the avowed object of their ambition. The contest was often extremely violent, and seldom decided till some individual, and frequently several, had received severe bodily harm. These meetings, which were common all over this county thirty years ago, are now very rare. For many miles round Whitehaven, all traces of them are obliterated; but in some parts of the north of Ireland, they still flourish in their pristine vigour. When a select number of good players are chosen from either side, no contest whatever requires more dexterity, action, and vigour. It then may be termed a combinatlon of loose wrestling, kicking, and running. It is usual in some parts of Ireland, in a contest between two counties, to make choice of the twelve best men in each, to decide (like the Horatii and Curiatii) the fate of the whole district. The champions are drawn up opposite to each other, and every man grasps the hand of his particular opponent. The ball is then thrown up so as to preserve the equality of the parties, and an instantaneous struggle to throw each other and reach the ball first, immediately takes place, as that party which gains the most falls will outnumber the other at the first onset, the greater prospect of ultimate success is thus determined by the previous wrestling. Contested in this manner, foot-ball would prove an attractive amusement in any part of the kingdom. One of the most extraordinary exhibitions of football which can possibly be witnessed annually takes place on Easter Tuesday at Workington. The contest is between the high and low part of the town; and so much interest does it excite, there are few inhabitants of the town who do not express some anxiety for the event. The great concourse of spectators, amongst whom are many strangers and residents of the adjacent neighbourhood, who come purposely to witness the sport and the number who take an

active part in the play, render any attempt to kick the ball out of the question. Throwing it, therefore, is the only method that can be practised; and it is a work both of danger and difficulty to get possession of the ball, and regain a position from which it can be thrown, as the person attempting it is generally grasped and assailed by three or four antagonists, who are by no means dilatory or sparing in assaulting him with a few friendly kicks or cuffs before he can achieve it. The eager and incessant cries of "up with her," and "down with her," at well from the players as spectators of both sexes, during a struggle to get possesion of the ball; the huzzas which the sight of it always occasions; and multitudes of all descriptions of people who crowd the immediate eminences which command a view of the place of action, form altogether a scene highly amusing and picturesque. It not unfrequently happens that the ball is thrown into the river Derwent (a favourite object with the down players); at such times, neither the depth nor rapidity of the water appear any obstacle to those who are thoroughbred; and many a complete ducking is the inevitable consequence before th up party can transfer the object of contention to *terra firma*. It has sometimes happened that the contest has been so equal and obstinate, that the ball has been divided on the ground; and consequently neither party acknowledged defeat. When the contest terminates, the scene of action is deserted for some time; afterwards numbers re-adjourn to the ground, when wrestling closes the sports of the day. The superiority of wrestling over football playing as an amusement, is evident in the following particulars:—Fewer accidents occur in it, and victory, which in wrestling is the enviable distinction due to one individual only; in foot-ball is equally claimed by one half of the whole competitors. The great difference this occasions may be illustrated by supposing two individuals, one a celebrated wrestler, and the other a distinguished football-player, present at any place of amusement where there is a large collection of people; the wrestler will be noticed and gazed at by almost every person present, while the other will

be regarded with comparative indifference. We do not say the wrestler regards this as an enviable distinction; but such is the preponderance over human nature, of the maxim "*aut Cæsar, aut nihil.*" The wrestler copes singly with one opponent; the football-player may be assailed by three or four antagonists at one time. Wrestling, as a rotative amusement, is calculated for exhibition in assemblies however large. Football, where all the players are engaged at once, requires a more large and open space of ground than can possibly be kept clear of interruption when a large crowd is assembled.

Most of the observations we have applied to football-playing will equally affect the athletic diversion of cricket, and all other games where a great number of players are engaged at once. Whatever dexterity they require, the numbers engaged prevent in a great measure their public exhibition, and involve the fortune of the best and most scientific player engaged with the blunders and incapability of the most ignorant. It is true, men are opposed to men; but certainly not exactly in the same manly manner as when opposed to each other in wrestling. The very names which distinguish these diversions, likewise inform us that the dexterity displayed in the kicking, striking, or hurling a ball is the criterion of excellence in them. In the northern counties of England they are seldom practised. Those persons who would relish such amusements cannot possibly find time, place, or opportunity to practice them; and those who possess all these have no inclination to avail themselves of them.

The gallant and scientific game of single stick, so much practised in many parts of Ireland, and some of the southern counties in England, is totally unknown in Cumberland and Westmorland. This game may certainly be termed as scientific, and calculated for placing the combatants on terms of equality, as much, or perhaps more so, than any other. In it, as in wrestling, every individual stands for himself only; and if he prove victorious, the merit is exclusively his own. The performers, when a prize is played for, will seldom be nume-

rous, as very few, excepting those who flatter themselves with the hope of ultimate victory, will enter the lists. A broken head, and a few remembrancers elsewhere, are things not generally relished. But the principal things we can with propriety urge in favour of wrestling over this gallant and hardy exercise, are, first, that one may be termed the science, or knowledge of one particular artificial weapon; and the other, the science of manhood only, without the aid of any artificial instrument whatever; and secondly, the national propensity of Englishmen to grapple with their antagonists. Thus, however much we may admire the manœuvres of a Wellington in choosing his ground, stationing his men, and evincing during an action his thorough knowledge of the whole art of war; and however we may exult in the steadiness of the men themselves, the precision of their fire, and their expertness in those tactics which are often a means of insuring victory; we always dwell with enthusiasm on those particular parts where our countrymen have been engaged with the bayonet. It is then only that we feel that proud and extatic feeling which makes us firmly believe the national and characteristic proverb, "that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen."

We come now to the consideration of amusements of quite another description to those we have heretofore commented upon. We mean those sports in which animals, and not men, are the principal performers; consequently, although they may prove as entertaining to many as those before treated of; yet they must certainly be accounted by all less noble and manly, both in their nature and tendency. As we cannot, however, class them under one head, we shall therefore offer a few observations on some of the most distinguished separately.

Horse-racing, in which this nation still continues to excel the whole world, and which was for a long time considered almost exclusively our own, is a favourite amusement with all who can spare time and money to witness it in any degree of perfection. The beauty and speed of that noble animal, and the alternate advantages

which sometimes occur in a well-contested race, are no doubt very powerful motives of attraction to all ranks of people. It is difficult to imagine how any number of men calling themselves the representatives of a free and powerful nation, could arrogate to themselves, and to those of equal rank, an exclusive right to enjoy any diversion from which the majority of their constituents were debarred. Yet, however partial to the amusement, without a man can afford to run a horse or fight a main of cocks, for fifty pounds, he must do it either in contempt or open defiance of a law, so arbitrary as to give to the rich only a legal right to partake of these two amusements. However, those of the poorer class who are addicted to these sports, contrive to amuse themselves in a way more adapted to their circumstances. They advertise their meetings for matches of fifty pounds, and a purse, which it is sufficiently understood constitutes the real sum; and by way of striking even with their superiors, debar any horse which has started for fifty pounds, matches and sweepstakes excepted. Horse-racing, however, is, independent of any drawback upon it, a very precarious and uncertain diversion. In races of any celebrity, even the knowing ones are seldom certain what horses will actually start; and more uncertain whether they will all equally try to win. This depends altogether on the speculations or caprice of the owners of every horse entitled to run. Thus the favourite horse is often kept back, and his rider ordered to lose the first heat. It is therefore manifestly the interest of his owner, and those initiated into the secret, to conceal the circumstance from the great majority, and make the most of their superior means of information. When this is the case we cannot call it better than pocket-picking; and that ignorance which prevails amongst the majority of the spectators as to the expected issue, and even the supposed expectation of the more knowing, must greatly detract from the gratification the diversion would otherwise afford.

At petty races, where the contending horses are termed leather-platers, an honest and well-contested race is seldom witnessed. The great ma-

jority of the spectators, when conversing about them, will frequently observe, "They expected nothing better, but came to see the wrestling." When what are termed very considerable subscriptions are run for in this county, the attendance is not proportioned by the expected races; thus, at Keswick the wrestling is the acknowledged grand source of attraction, and even at Carlisle, where the king's hundred is given, independent of large subscriptions, there was not last year, except in one solitary instance, any amusement expected, as many of the knowing ones were certain of every other result. With such a drawback upon the ostensible cause of the meeting, a very circumscribed attendance might have been anticipated. But on the morning of the wrestling, the many thousands flocking to the scene of action sufficiently testified the interest that amusement excited, without any other inducement whatever; and so far will those who will, without making any invidious distinction, fairly compare these amusements, and the feelings they may naturally excite, be from wondering at this decided preference, that they will rejoice at it. After what we have already advanced respecting wrestling in different parts of this treatise, there is no occasion at present to enlarge upon its tendency to promote a generous spirit of emulation, which must in all its consequences, prove highly advantageous in a national point of view.

It is far, very far from our purpose to depreciate any amusement; on the contrary, it is our wish to give every one of them every iota of merit to which they can possibly be entitled. But at the same time, we have pledged ourselves to view them philosophically; that is, to strip them of every superficial ornament, and consider them as they really are in themselves. Consistent with this principle, we hesitate not to pronounce the horse a very useful, and what many have called him, a noble animal. We readily acknowledge it is important to preserve, and, if possible, improve our own distinguished breed, which is universally allowed to be the best in the world, willingly subscribe to the doctrine that horse-racing is one of the most efficient means of doing so, and even from our own

experience, testify the delight a well-contested race is capable of producing. But allowing all this, we are obliged to ask, what hath delighted us? That which is the characteristic meed of the winning horse! One irrational animal, goaded by whip and spurs, has run three or four miles in perhaps less than a moment's space of time, sooner than another! Possibly a substantial gratification to his owner, and perhaps a few other interested individuals, who may have won some hundreds of pounds by the circumstance; but consequently a source of mortification, disappointment, and regret, to those who have lost it.

But again. What great achievement hath been derformed to inspire in the breasts of the spectators any laudable desire of emulation? Truly, none. For what man would for a moment imagine himself in the situation of a horse, his owner is another matter. Many of equal rank, or fortune, may wish to possess such an animal, and strive to acquire others which may at some future opportunity excel it; but amongst the majority such a wish is vain; it is no other than that of possessing equal means of procuring one.

We proceed now to the consideration of an amusement essentially different from horse-racing, and perhaps the most popular in all ages of any upon record, we need scarcely say we mean hunting, in different objects of pursuit, and various motives for pursuing them. In some countries they hunt for subsistence, in some for safety, and in others for pleasure only. In the United Kingdom, the last is the only motive; and generally speaking, the objects are three, the stag, the fox, and the hare. Of these, the hare is the most general; and therefore we will make that animal the more immediate object of our consideration in the observations we will make respecting hunting. Hunting is equally esteemed as an exercise as well as an amusement, combining two of the greatest earthly blessings, health and pleasure; and we will not detract from the pleasure it affords, by stingily urging the consequences which may result from the pursuit of it; such as overheating, catching cold, breaking a limb,

or possibly a neck, &c. What spectacle can be more animated and alluring than a well-attended chase? The sight and music of the dogs, eagerly followed, directed, and encouraged by horse and footmen, form such an overpowering combination of incidents as supersedes by its irresistible impulse almost every other consideration! The traveller and the labourer, the gentleman and the beggar, will all equally gaze on the enchanting scene, and often tempted by its magic influence, deviate from their immediate avocation for the pleasure of witnessing it a few moments longer. But does the sight instil into the breast of any generous and reflecting man one praiseworthy sentiment, or furnish him with any example of noble or manly emulation? Alas! no. We fear when duly considered, it is a striking proof of the frailty of man, and his deplorable proneness to be led away by sensual propensities. The fear of one animal, and the ferocity of others, are the sole cause of the pleasure he experiences. The hare, the most timid of quadrupeds, aided by speed and very circumscribed natural sagacity, endeavours to elude its pursuers, and preserve itself from a death the most terrific and horrible even a reasonable mind can possibly suggest. The dogs, guided by instinct and natural ferocity, and capable of enduring much greater fatigue, preserve the same tract, and mutually guide and encourage each other in the work of destruction. The little animal, instructed by self-preservation, retraces, or traces over again, nearly the same ground, and would often baffle its ferocious pursuers; and what hinders it? Man, endowed with reason and reflection! Man! the boasted lord of the earth interposes! For what motive? To preserve the weak from the strong? No! Quite the contrary! To guide and impel the latter to the work of blood and murder! Thus not only encouraging, but joining on terms of equality with dogs and horses in the deed. But surely it is some powerful motive which thus induces him to derogate from his natural dignity? Some means of acquiring honour, profit, or benefitting the community at large? No! We are again reluctantly obliged to answer in the negative.

No honour can be acquired either in the pursuit or the death of so weak and timid an animal, except that false notion of the term which arises from the circumstance of tempting providence more than his companions, by some dangerous leap, or other similar cause ; which even then he must share with his horse, and between profit, the desire of benefitting others, and hunting, we need scarcely observe there is an insuperable bar. Aided by man, the final result is generally as follows :—The poor helpless animal, quite exhausted with terror and fatigue, is no longer capable of active effort. It lays itself down in the vague expectation of concealment, and there awaits its fate; or rises only to meet a death replete with terrors. A few terrific squeals nearly drowned by the exulting cries of its pursuers, announce the termination of its cruel fate. The note of triumph is sounded by its generous and pitying enemies, who congratulate each other on the sports of the day, and point out the respective merits of their meek and gentle assistants, which are often distinguished by the names of Charmer, Lovely, Comely, &c.; and sometimes enlighten and edify each other, by seriously asserting that the hare hearkens with pleasure to the pursuit, and that the moment she is caught her terrors greatly subside! We will subscribe that they are not long in doing so, as they will vanish with life ; but we cannot say we ever heard any of those instructive and very knowing gentlemen contend, that the dying shrieks of the wretched animal were notes of satisfaction and pleasure!

Many lovers of the chase, we doubt not, will be ready to assert, that we colour the picture too strongly, and that no other person will view the subject in the manner we have represented it. We answer, we believe our arguments too true to be easily disproved; and that the subject has been regarded in nearly a similar manner by one, whose capability of judging will not be disputed, when we name the yet unrivalled poet of the seasons, who, in his autumn, thus speaks of the subject :—

> "———— 'Tis not joy to her,
> This falsely cheerful barbarous game of death ;

This rage of pleasure, which the restless youth
Awakes, impatient, with the gleaming morn;
When beasts of prey retire, that all night long,
Urg'd by necessity, had rang'd the dark,
As if their conscious ravage shun'd the light,
Asham'd. Not so the steady tyrant man,
Who with the thoughtless insolence of power
Inflam'd, beyond the most infuriate wrath
Of the worst monster that e'er roam'd the waste,
For sport alone pursues the cruel chase,
Amid the beamings of the gentle days.
Upbraid, ye ravening tribes, our wanton rage,
For hunger kindles you, and lawless want;
But lavish fed, in nature's bounty roll'd,
To joy at anguish, and delight in blood,
Is what your horrid bosoms never knew,
"Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare!
* * * * * * * * *
With every breeze she hears the coming storm.
But nearer, and more frequent, as it loads
The sighing gale, she springs amaz'd, and all
The savage soul of game is up at once:
The pack full-opening, various; the shrill horn
Resounded from the hills; the neighing steed,
Wild for the chase; and the loud hunter's shout;
O'er a weak, harmless, flying creature, all
Mix'd in mad tumult, and discordant joy."

To dwell upon any comparison between wrestling, an amusement, exercise, and contest of men only; and those wherein men are leagued with different animals, would be ridiculous; for whatever attractions they possess, eventually recede when philosophically considered, as those peculiar to this country furnish no model from which any noble, manly, or laudable motive can be derived. The same observations which we have applied to hare hunting will preserve nearly their full force with regard to coursing, or shooting. Fishing, of which some are remarkably fond, is a thing too solitary of itself to afford matter of comparison with wrestling, which preserves its importance through every parallel of consideration. We shall, therefore, after offering a few words on cockfighting, proceed to the next part of our subject.

Cockfighting, as a diversion, is under the same restrictions as horseracing, requiring a large stake to render it legal. Notwithstanding this kind of monopoly, and the fate of a bill brought into the House of Commons to abolish it entirely, which was rejected by a large majority, it is in the licences

of all publicans, &c. strictly prohibited, and stigmatized as a barbarous diversion. In defiance of this arbitrary distinction between rich and poor, it is practised by the latter class all over the kingdom. It is perhaps the only diversion in which men are not the principal actors, which has regular and professed enemies to encounter; those who have no predilection for hunting, shooting, &c. content themselves with abstaining from them, and never think of censuring others for acting differently, nay, many professedly attached to these sports, would feel indignant to be termed a cockfighter!

Yet however much a few of the superior and middle class may condemn the lower orders of people for practising it in this immediate neighbourhood, we cannot find that the characters of Lord Derby, and numerous noblemen and gentlemen who openly profess, and practise this diversion in a legal manner, were ever called in question for doing so. For our own part we have never been able to find any reason why they should; and if none exist, it surely is a very invidous distinction that what is legal and harmless in one man, should be so very heinous in another. The enemies of this diversion characterise it is a cruel, barbarous, and wicked mode of gambling; while those who profess it are at no loss to produce arguments in its support. The Rev. George Crabbe, in his justly admired poem, "The Parish Register," thus treats of it:—

"See the poor bird the inhuman cocker brings,
Arms his hard heel, and clips his golden wings;
With spicy food th' impatient spirit feeds,
And shouts and curses as the battle bleeds.
Struck thro' the brain, depriv'd of both his eyes,
The vanquish'd bird must combat till he dies;
Must faintly peck at his victorious foe,
And reel and stagger at each feeble blow:
When fall'n, the savage grasps his dabbled plumes,
His blood-stain'd arms for other deaths assumes;
And damns the Craven-fowl that lost his stake,
And *only* bled and perish'd for his sake!"

For ourselves

"Who own we prize the joy such battle brings,
And love the whistling of the shorten'd wings,"

And, therefore, cannot be supposed exactly to coincide with the reverend gentleman in such sweeping con-

clusions; yet we will admit that cases may possibly occur in which such a description may not be far from the truth. As we before professed, we have no wish, or intention, to add to, or detract from, the merits of any diversion, further than what we conceive to be a reasonable view of the question; we will therefore concisely offer a few remarks on the different opinions respecting this. As to the cruelty, or barbarity of the practise, we are at a loss to conceive how such a charge can be urged consistently by those do not equally censure hunting, shooting, &c. Surely no man in his senses, unless totally blinded by prejudice, can pretend to argue, that an equal combat between two birds which need no incitement but their mutual and natural animosity, can possible be either cruel or barbarous, compared with leaguing, and combining with twenty, thirty, or forty ferocious animals, to worry a defenceless one! Or to a man who uses artificial means to destroy, or deceive a bird or a fish, which would never willingly come either in his way or his sight! And pursue the subject through every head it embraces, either in respect to right, property, or any other parallel, and the comparison will invariably be found in favour of cockfighting.

As to the wickedness of the diversion, by which is meant the wicked conduct, or language, of those who witness the sport, we greatly wonder at the ignorance and credulity of those who make the remark. In all public places of meeting, be they markets, fairs, theatres, churches, meetings, or any other place of resort whatever, there are generally found some of the most profligate and abandoned characters in the neighbourhood. In all gentleman pits, or where any considerable sum is fought for, the utmost order and regularity is preserved; and any person using profane or blackguard language would be turned out without ceremony. Even in this vicinity, where entrance money is required, we have often witnessed very quiet meetings; and we hesitate not to say, have observed amongst the spectators, men, if not entirely Corinthians, yet, if independent circum-

stances, knowledge, manners, and general good character, entitle those who possess them to the appellation of gentlemen, as much deserving of that estimable term as any in the neighbourhood where they reside.

It is true there are cockfights of a very, very different description; but surely it is unfair to stigmatize all those who are present for the bad conduct of a few, who are generally themselves no cockfighters; and if some of those who are be not so decorous in the phrases elicited from them during a battle as might be wished, without terming it "unsophisticated nature," (which is done by Boxiana) there are certainly more excuses for so doing, than those who censure them are willing to allow. Let it be recollected, it is all the diversion in their power to enjoy. A plebeian may keep a cock, but can he keep a horse? Is he allowed to shoot? He may, when it is the pleasure of a qualified man to sanction the sport by his presence, witness a hunt; but can he be said to share in it? And in everything else that can be called an amusement, there are equal obstacles. To share in any diversion, a man must feel himself as fully independent as the rest of the company. Cockfighting is a diversion in which the money sported is sported as a matter of judgment, consequently, widely different from cards, dice, or any wager of blind chance; and never in such sums as are depending upon a pugilistic contest or horserace, and therefore is not equally deserving of the term gambling. Surely men have as much right so to use a bird exclusively their own as others have to pursue and destroy those to which they can have no possible claim. What substitutes the mighty difference between a soldier and a cock? The man, though his feelings may revolt at the service he is ordered upon, has no alternative; he must go without grumbling where he is commanded; hazard his own life, and do his best to shed the blood of his fellman when required:— On the other hand, the nature, and the feelings of the bird impel it to the combat; and its chance of life and remuneration are fully equal to the soldier's. In a cock-battle, the spectators are convinced that true courage and alacrity in

seizing every advantage that presents itself, are the surest means of preserving life and acquiring honour; and it may be an incentive to conduct themselves in the same manner if called upon by their country; as we are not without examples in history, of celebrated generals making such a combat, the subject of an oration to their soldiers, and pointed out as a pattern of persevering courage highly worthy of imitation.

It may likewise be observed that the bitterest enemies of this diversion are, in a great degree, ignorant of what they condemn in so unqualified a manner; nay, would deem it an affront to have it supposed that they had such a knowledge or actual experience of the subject as every candid man ought to possess before he gives so decided an opinion respecting its merits. Thus, were we to ask the reverend author we have quoted, if he had ever fought a cock, or attended a regular meeting, we have little doubt, an indignant negative would be the reply; it should likewise be remarked his description is a very unfair one; it is not the description of a battle, but of a losing bird only; and even amongst losers, it is very seldom indeed the owner will attach any blame to his cock; on the contrary, he is always anxious to prevent its being overmatched; and its fame is so dear to him, that it must prove itself unworthy as a game cock of the regard he has manifested for it, before he is willing to hear of its faults. Possibly a solitary instance to the contrary might occur; and we hope the reverend gentleman alludes to such a one, as the first line we have quoted runs thus,—

"See the poor bird the inhuman cocker brings;"

We sincerely hope few cockers, or even men, worthy the epithet inhuman; and we dare assert few cocks meriting the appellation of "poor birds" are brought to try their courage and prowess in a pit, as the game cock is generally stiled the noblest of the feathered tribe; and it is universally known, he is kept, trained, and attended upon, so as to bring him to the combat in the supposed most advantageous situation to insure victory, but no wonder even so admired and celebrated an author, should have

adopted so lame an expression, when it would be deemed an affront to suppose he understood what he was writing about.

But still in despite of all that can be urged in favour of cockfighting, (and many will think we have said quite enough) it has no claim whatever to what are the characteristics of an amusement. Those even and placid feelings which have a kind of oblivious effect upon the senses, and infuse a kind of tranquil pleasures into the mind; can have no assimilation to the active, violent, and bloody struggles witnessed in a cockpit. It cannot properly be (although it usually is) termed a diversion. To be diverted, or in a certain degree, delighted, is a feeling very different from that eager expectation and anxiety of mind depicted in the countenances of the spectators. It is then a sport; or more properly, a way of sporting, or risking money according to an opinion; and when it is considered that the issue implies the death of one of the birds which occasions the sport, and often severe injury to the other, it is certainly a cruel one. It is idle to suppose such crowds would assemble to witness the mere act of one bird killing another, if there were no other inducement. It is certainly the good opinion every man entertains of his own judgment, which makes him eagerly embrace such occasions of exercising it for his own supposed advantage; and we need not say how fallacious such opinions frequently prove. The spectators in pay pits are, in many places, generally betters, and consist of all descriptions of such men as are often witnessed in a large assemblage; the rich and poor; the old and young; the strong and feeble; and the active and cripple; may all witness, and according to their means, be all equally interested in it. The courage of a cock may serve well enough as a subject of comparison for an harangue; but is it not degrading to man to suppose a bird can be a proper object for his imitation? He may be convinced that courage is a great means of acquiring victory; but can the sight of it in a bird infuse it into his own breast? In wrestling, when young and active men oppose each other, the sight is worthy of men to look at, and may

well be supposed to inspire that emulation which despises danger; and while it instructs men to cope with men, gives them both power and confidence to do so effectually; but how can it be supposed the mere sight of any bird, or animal whatever, can produce the same consequences.

We are now arrived at a part of our subject which, though the most important, and more immediate object of this treatise, is nevertheless one fraught with difficulties, as we are well aware it is not possible to lay down rules equally satisfactory to all. In such a case, the course we will pursue is simply this; our reasons for every particular rule shall immediately follow it; thus the reader will have ample means to form his own opinion, and if it do not coincide with our own, we trust his candour will acquit us of intentional error.

Rule 1st.—The umpire, writer, and crier, appointed by a majority of those who give the prize, or by the person to whom it is entrusted, having taken their stations within the ring, every wrestler shall come forward to the writer, enter his own name, and immediately retire to some allotted station, where he will be expected to be found when called upon. The writer prepared with paper ready lined and ruled, shall set the names down as they are given in; while his assistants shall take care he is not confused by the wrestlers pressing upon him faster than he can write down their names.

Observations on rule 1st.—Respecting this rule few observations are necessary, as we think very few can object to any part of it. We will, however, in those parts where it is possible there may be some difference of opinion, methodically consider the reasons on which it is grounded.

It will appear clear and evident to all, that those who give the prize, if they do not themselves preside on the occasion, have certainly a right to name those who shall. A writer and crier may easily be found, as the most important part of their duty is care and attention; but very few are qualified to act as umpires. That station requires a competent knowledge of wrestling; equanimity of temper; decided judgment; and strict impartiality. We have

always observed that one umpire is preferable to two or three. It may be said, that spectators on one side of the ring do not see a fall in exactly the same manner as those on some other. To this we answer, if one umpire think a fall disputable, and even three, or four more think otherwise, the fall must either be wrestled over again, or it will occasion far more dissension than if one single decisive determination had been given, and if the fall be such that one competent umpire cannot determine it immediately it cannot be a very fair one.

It is certainly much better for every man to enter his own name, and, if required, his place of abode, lest there should be more of the same name. Every experienced person will often have observed that much confusion has been occasioned by the same name having been entered twice over. And when a wrestler's name is entered against his real or pretended inclination, if he do not fancy his man, no contest takes place; as he will observe, he knew nothing about it, he did not think of wrestling, &c.; by every man entering his own name, all such whiffling will be avoided. If his name is then called, it is by his own desire, and such excuses are done away with at once.

It has always been found desirable, that the wrestlers should be in some place where they can come forward immediately when their names are called. On this account, they are generally permitted to lie down inside the ring; which many of them are anxious to do, that they may witness the sport, and notice the methods of those with whom they may have to contend; therefore if one side of the ring be allotted for this purpose, those who do not choose to avail themselves of it, will have no excuse for not coming forward in time to answer to their names.

Rule 2nd.—All the names being entered, the writer shall mention the first and the last on the list to the crier, carefully placing at the same time the figure 1 before the names, to denote that they are the last called; and to instruct him to find, without danger of a mistake, the two next in turn. The crier shall go to that part of the ring allotted

to the wrestlers and repeat the said names loudly and distinctly. The men shall immediately answer, and come forward; which, if they neglect to do in such a time as the umpire shall deem reasonable, the defaulter shall lose the fall. On their meeting, leaving them to the umpire, the crier, furnished with the names next in turn, shall call upon the owners of them to get ready, while those preceding them get hold and wrestle, On the termination of every fall, the umpire shall give in to the writer the names of the winner and loser, which he shall write down opposite to each other, placing the figure 2 before the winner's name, which will always be the first written. The writer taking the names next to those marked, marking them in a similar manner, and writing the names given in by the umpire, shall proceed till the whole are called. If there prove an odd name in the middle of the list, it shall be called to the first winner; but if the odd man prove the conqueror, his name, though of course wrote opposite to the man's he has thrown, shall retain the figure 1 to it, which will then become indicative of the falls he has won. The writer thus marking and calling the first and last winning names together in every round, which he must take care to distinguish; and in like manner, still writing the names of those who contend opposite to each other; it will appear the odd man has wrestled one fall fewer than those in the same list, as every other name will be marked with the figure 2; and if he win the next fall, his name advancing one every fall, will have the 2 prefixed to it, while the others on that list have 3. Thus his name being at the head of the list, he will meet the odd man in the previous round; if he win, he will still remain one behind upon the next list; and if he lose, his conqueror exchanges situations with him. By this method, when few are left, the umpire will have it in his power to place them on an equal footing. Thus when three are left, if the first has only thrown three men, and the other two four each, they may toss, draw cuts, or ticket, which is to wrestle him first; but if all three have wrestled equal, they may in like manner decide which two shall wrestle first.

Observations on Rule 2nd.—Respecting the subject of this rule, as there have been various methods practised, there have, and probably will continue to be, various opinions. After remarking the defects of all others, we will make a few observations on the one we have substituted in their place. For a long time it was the practice to call the first and second, third and fourth, fifth and sixth, and so on, together. The deficiency of this mode is obvious. Those wishing to wrestle did not like to follow each other into the ring, as it had the appearance of premediated opposition. Consequently, the first time over, there was scarcely a fall wrestled; and as every noted wrestler had generally friends who contrived to go in so as to secure him the second, and sometimes the third round, the greatest part of the wrestling was a mere farce, and a stranger had by no means an equal chance. It then became the custom to call the first and last names together; but as the names were not written over again, but the losing name merely scratched out, the writer frequently got wrong, particularly when an odd name occurred; and if an even number were preserved, as it was generally pretty well ascertained what it would be, many went in to save their friends, without any intention of wrestling. It was, however, considered much less objectionable than the other.

When the Carlisle wrestling commenced, the men matched themselves the first time over; and then the first and last were called together. This method did not long prevail, as it was evidently a bad one. It was obvious there were many sham wrestles the first time over; and both the names were not only to procure, but to compare with the list, to see if they had regularly entered; which could not be done without looking the whole carefully over, and consequently losing time. The present mode of ticketing them then became general. It is, without doubt, evidently superior to any other now practised, but we conceive it liable to the following objections:—In the first place, it is far too complicated a mode to be accurate. The tickets if scattered about, or the wrong one torn, are nothing but a means of confusion, and when four men are called into the ring,

there are no unexceptionable means of convincing them that all is as it should be. The Carlisle meeting last year was a strong proof of this; nothing like an accurate list was to be had. Some names were found both in the winning and losing column the same round; and on wrestling over again, there were instances of those entitled being objected, and those not entitled winning two falls. Secondly, it may happen, particularly where there are few competitors, that men coming from the same place, or who will not wrestle with each other, may be ticketed together the first round. This, of course, prevents sport, and should, if possible, be avoided. Thirdly, in ticketing, those who have the direction of drawing, may keep back a ticket, or call any two together they think proper; and in instances where all the men are not satisfied there are no means left of convincing them all is perfectly fair. We do not think this right. All should be fair and open; and even those who give the prize should not be allowed to use any sinister means of bringing men together. It may be said, "a powerful man is a coward if he be afraid of an equal opponent." This is nothing to the purpose. The prize is declared, and supposed to be, equally free for all; therefore, although the men may not be afraid of each other, they have certainly a right to find fault if their names be purposely drawn together. It is by the attendance of well-known men that the greatest interest is excited, and their chance of gaining a prize should by no means be lessened, which it evidently is in such cases; for there may be others equally as good, who are running the chance of falling in with an inferior, while they are purposely called in against an equal.

The superiority of the method we have recommended over all these cannot fail to be evident to an impartial observer. While men who do not wish to come together may prevent it by entering their names immediately following each other at any time but in the exact centre; they can have no possible guess who will be their opponent. For as the low and high numbers, are called together in the first round till they meet in the centre, the

centre names are consequently after that round thrown to the last, and will in the second round, meet a high, or a low number indiscriminately, which will cause them to be scattered in the head of the list in the third round. Thus supposing forty enter at first; the numbers 1, and 40, are called together, and so on, till 20 and 21 meet in the centre, then it is quite uncertain whether the centre victor 19 or 22, will meet the conquering number of 2 and 39, one of which must be the second victor in that round; and so on progressively. By this means the principal objections to the three first methods are at once obviated, as is likewise one of the objections we have made to ticketing; and if the umpire and writer are at all careful, no mistake can rise, as the writer will perceive at a single glance what names are next the marked ones which have been called; and if any dispute arise, the list is still there to rectify it. Therefore, while this method preserves all the uncertainty of ticketing, the list will be ready for publication the moment the wrestling is over; and on perusing it, every man may convince himself he has been fairly treated. As it is a very great chance a number dividing equal to the last, such as 32, 64, or 128, will be the exact number entered; it is desirable it should be one doing so till very few competitors remain. Thus, 96 will leave three, and 80, five, &c. In such cases, the umpire having the power of equalizing the chance, should then ticket them, as the small number, and the men having become conspicious, would then prevent any confusion; and he would recommend the umpire to call them forward to witness their own names drawn. Whenever an odd number occurs, the prizes should not be definitely settled till the last fall, as the wrestlers cannot be on equal terms. For example; last year at Carlisle, eight guineas were the first prize, and one guinea only, the second; making seven guineas the distinction for winning the last round. Now, Cass who won the first prize was wrestling his sixth fall, and Todd his seventh. It does not seem reasonable therefore, that Cass should have been entitled to the same sum for throwing six men, as Todd who had already

thrown six men, and was hazarding a seventh contest. Such cases will we hope in future receive proper consideration.

Finally, it may be necessary to remark, that after the first round, the numbers, except the marks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, indicative of the rounds, and falls the names before them have won, may be laid aside; their principal use being to ascertain the number entered, which as it occupies little time, and may be done before hand, is well worth the trouble.

Rule 3rd.—When two men cannot soon agree in taking hold, the umpire shall place them at such a distance as the size of the men, may render proper for ulterior proceeding. He shall then cause them to square their shoulders, and the higher part of their breasts against each other, in such manner that the right and left shoulder blades of both are perfectly level, and the arms stretched out so that the hands are in a line with the pap of the breast. He shall then direct one of them to take hold without shrinking his right breast and shoulder underneath his opponent's; and so as to preserve a perfect equality in the use of the right arm: when this is the case, making proper allowance for contracting the arms by grasping the back of his opponent, the hold will be something below the level of the paps. If the umpire is satisfied the hold is fair, he shall cause the other to take hold likewise, without shrinking, or swerving to either side; which being done, he shall immediately give the word. If the umpire perceives that either party is striving for an advantage, or will not take hold, he shall decide the fall against him; and if neither party will implicitly obey his directions, he shall cross them both out without further loss of time.

Observations on Rule 3rd.—This rule embraces the disagreeable, and grand cause of contention in wrestling; and it is impossible to word, or limit it so, as to please every wrestler. It is by far the most desirable for men to agree themselves; as it is a very difficult matter for any but an experienced wrestler, and not easy for him, to decide between them, but if they will not agree, and infringe upon, or tire out the patience of the spectators, or those

who give the prize for general amusement, some method of decision becomes absolutely necessary. The method we have laid down seems well adapted for placing the tight, and slack-hold wrestlers, on an equal footing. It is such such a one as the tight-hold wrestler may gather with, or strike from; and at the same time one which does not debar the slack-hold wrestler from using his own peculiar mode.

There is nothing more galling to a Wrestler, than an ignorant umpire putting the hands together, and asserting a man may get hold, when perhaps the other has his right shoulder against his breast and his right arm pinned to his side close to his elbow. It is well known to every Wrestler, that a single inch either in the arm, or breast, when the men are nearly equal, will almost invariably decide the contest. We have not mentioned any particular time to allow men to take hold in, as circumstances might arise to render a limited time injudicious, and the umpire trusted with full power ought to be a competent judge of the matter. Many very fair wrestler may wish to feel each others manœuvres and regulate their actions accordingly, before they take hold. We think such a proceeding when the parties are not long over it perfectly fair and by no means detracting from the satisfaction of the judicious spectator.

Rule 4th.—If the man who takes the latter hold, makes play at the same time, and either throws his opponent immediately, or obtains such an advantage by it as in the judgment of the umpire occasions the ultimate termination of the fall; or if the first taker hold, strike before it can be clearly ascertained the other has hold, and obtains a similar advantage by doing so, the fall shall be wrestled over again; and if the same conduct be repeated, the offender shall lose the fall. It shall likewise be allowed fair for either party to quit their hold, if their opponent strikes, or makes play, in the above improper manner.

Rule 5th.—If either party when endeavouring to take hold, shall throw, or attempt to throw his opponent down, when he is conscious they have not both hold, the fall shall instantly be decided in

favour of the injured party.

Observations on rules 4th and 5th.—Neither of these rules require many observations. The fourth is to prevent snapping, or one party gaining a decided advantage by improper means. The punishment, while it seems adequate to the offence, is not over much so. The justice and necessity of the fifth is obvious for the preservation of peace and good order. If such an act be done in a passion, the offence richly merits the punishment. If not, any attempt to excite the laughter of a few partial, and unthanking spectators at the expense of any wrestler, must be considered not only an insult to him, but to every impartial observer. It must be evident to all, that any person entering the ring, although it is his own inclination that prompts him to it, is one of the contributors to that amusement they are assembled to witness for their own gratification, and cannot possibly be a proper object of ridicule; therefore any other person attempting to make him one, should justly be debarred from doing so a second time.

Bule 6th.—If, when wrestling, the men get disengaged by their hands slipping over each others head and they remain opposite each other on terms of perfect equality, it shall be in the option of either party to leave go, and take hold again, as at the first meeting; but if one of the parties lose his grasp it shall be deemed perfectly fair for the other to continue the wrestle till he does so likewise, or the fall terminates. If both the parties during a struggle become disengaged, if one throw the other before they remain stationary or fronting each other, it shall be deemed a fair fall.

Observations on Rule 6th.—We do not anticipate any objections to this rule, as the determinations it contains are precisely the same as have uniformly governed the cases they allude to, which is a convincing proof of their equity. The rule embraces the only three situations which can possibly occur from the particular circumstance it treats of. In the first case, it has been usual for the men to consult each other, and both leave go at the same time, least he that first quitted should forfeit the fall by

doing so. Should the wrestlers themselves agree to continue the contest, provided they do not stand long, the spectators have no reason to complain; but we never witnessed a case wherein either party objected to a fresh hold. The reason of the second is too obvious to dwell upon. It would occasion endless disputes if a man were entitled to another hold by slipping his own arms over his adversary's head whenever he was likely to get the worst of it; and if such a circumstance be occasioned by exertion in making play, it is perfectly right he should abide the consequences of his own act. As for the third case, it can be but momentary; for if the action which immediately follows the act of disengagement be not decisive, the men will instantly be in a state of perfect equality.

Rule 7th.—After the men have both taken hold, if either of them quits it, either by endeaveuring to save himself by accident, or by attempting to throw his adversary, he shall lose the fall, provided his adversary retains his own hold and does not go down by that effort, or manœuvre, which is the immediate occasion, or object of quitting the hold; but if his adversary, though retaining his hold, goes to the ground without recovering himself, if it be not immediately, yet in such a manner as is obviously the consequence resulting from such manœuvre, he shall win the fall. If the effort occasions both parties to lose their hold, and both or neither go down, it shall be deemed a wrestle over again.

Observations on Rule 7th.—Such of our readers as are at all acquainted with the subject cannot fail to perceive how tenacious we are in adhering to those determinations which have hitherto been considered decisive. Yet although this is the case, we must remind them, that having never appeared before in any tangible shape, they could only be regarded as matters of opinion; but by the publication of this treatise, they now, when noticed as standard regulations, become proper authority to decide by. The present rule treats of a subject which has often occasioned a difference of opinion among noted wrestlers, and therefore it is our duty briefly to state the reasons which have always in

fluenced our decision respecting it. As for the first part of it, that is, any man's quitting his hold to prevent his going down, no shadow of doubt respecting its justice can possibly arise. The second, namely, quitting by accident, admits of no alternative. It is true there may be frequent instances of the hands slipping asunder without any obvious reason, and the party closing them again without any manifest advantage; yet if such an act was was not uniformly regarded as decisive of the fall, there would be no end to the disputes it might occasion. This is so universally acknowledged, that whenever it has been ascertained the hands were clear of each other, it has always been regarded a fall. A spirited attack, if it does not succeed, generally places the assailant in a disadvantageous situation; and therefore, if he lose his hold at the same time, it is certainly just he should lose the fall: but if the hold be quitted as an auxiliary to the attack, which, if scientifically done, is often effective; their appears to be no well grounded reason why such united efforts, (which acquire additional dexterity) if they succeed in forcing the defendant to go down without any future display of action, should not be decisive. As to the act of retaining the hold, if a man goes down, it is evident it could not avail him in any situation, and therefore should not; but if he does not, he has committed no act of forfeiture, and cannot be liable to any penalty: his adversary has done so by quitting his hold, and therefore justly forfeits the fall: and finally, if both have quitted, they can be considered no otherwise than on equal terms, and therefore must wrestler over again.

Rule 8th.—If both the men go down in such a manner that it cannot be clearly and distinctly ascertained which of them was first on the ground, it shall be deemed a wrestle over, or as is provincially termed a dogfall, and the decision shall be given without any regard to the circumstance of making play. A man's knees or hands, or either of them, touching the ground, shall be considered conclusive of his being down in all cases, except he is fairly covering his man, and it is occasioned by the desire of making the fall easier to himself or his antagonist;

when such is the manifest intention, it shall not interfere with his claim to the fall.

Observations on Rule 8th.—Justice and fairplay between man and man, should be the invariable motto of every Englishman; and we can with truth say, that in regard to these rules at least, it has uniformly been ours. In many places where loose holds are practised, no fall is considered fair, but when one party only goes to the ground, and not even then, except he is thrown upon his back. In close wrestling, such a regulation would be endless; and it has always been the custom merely to decide who had the best of it. In this view of the question, the man who first touches the ground (unless it is in such a case as we have excepted), may be said to be first foiled. As we look upon wrestling to be the most chivalric and manly exercise since the abolition of tournaments, we think a trifling advantage, if it clearly be one, is quite sufficient. So extremely tenacious were our ancesters in this respect, that in tournaments, if a knight lost one of his stirrups in the encounter, it was considered he did not part from his adversary on equal terms, and therefore he was deemed as much worsted as if he had been unhorsed altogether; and, were it not so, when a visible advantage is obtained, it would be impossible to define where the distinction should be drawn; but, if the matter be dubious, it is clearly a wrestle over. A man may, sometimes, certainly go down upon one hand, or knee, and in that situation, bring his opponent down under him; but such a circumstance ought not to influence a decision; nor, unless it happen by accident, should it be allowed, as many falls would then become a mere scuffle, and quite unworthy Englishmen either to look at or practice.

Rule 9th.—When the men are called into the ring, no agreement shall be allowed to take place between them relative to one of them yielding the fall, without the sanction of the umpire: but if they wrestle fairly, they shall have liberty to divide what the conqueror shall win, as they think proper

Rule 10th.—If it is apparent that there is a private agreement between two wrestlers, and that the

contest is not a fair one, the umpire, if it appears to him that the stander has promised any remuneration to the other for lying down, may call him against the odd man; but if there be no odd man, or if there be two standers only, the umpire may regulate the distribution of the prize as he deems proper, or, in other words, so as to prevent any set of men making a mere property of the sum given to contend for.

Observations on Rules 9th and 10th.—We have chosen to class the observations on those two final rules together, as any remarks upon one will naturally have some allusion to the other. We are well aware, though we have no doubt of convincing any impartial man of their propriety, that many wrestlers will consider them as unjust; and even observe that we ourselves have frequently violated them. We acknowledge the latter charge to be correct. Yet that circumstance does not by any means prevent us from judging of their propriety; on the contrary, it enables us to be certain that such proceedings prevent contests, and occasion much dissatisfaction amongst the spectators; but we defy any person to prove, that during the many years we wrestled for renown, we were ever either concerned in a sham wrestle, or laid down to any acknowledged wrestle whatever. No. Victory was our motto; and if it had been equally so with our opponent, a contest would have been inevitable. As to the justice of every part of these rules, we dare confidently appeal to any distinguished wrestler who has retired from the ring with honour "bravely and hardly won;" although perhaps there is no such person but what has frequently violated them. Every prize, however small, is given with the same intention as the sums subscribed at Keswick and Carlisle; that is, to assemble numbers together, and entertain them when assembled; therefore what is considered perfectly fair at those places, cannot be considered unfair when comparatively small sums are contended for. Let us, therefore, ask the gentlemen who subscribe, or the impartial spectators for whose amusement such sums are subscribed, if they think it right that those who have come to contend for the

prize should fee one another off, or by a sham wrestle enable their friends to swindle the spectators? When the Carlisle wrestling was discontinued, it was owing to a private agreement between the two last standers refusing to wrestle. Mr. Pearson consequently refused to give them the money. So far we think he was perfectly right, but we do not think he was altogether so in withholding the second prizes from those who had contended fairly from the first, and were willing to do so for the second. We know there were some who had travelled fifty miles to wrestle, and might reasonably have expected to have shared in the second prize. We will in another and more proper place, prove that the system of bribery had been before practised there; and though it might be disapproved of, was yet partly allowed, as no money was withheld; and if we may judge from the second prize last year, the system, without some effectual check, is becoming more notorious than ever. What was the fact? Weightman, who won, wrestled two falls, and Graham, who came last, only one; and the natives were, as the warm-hearted natives of the land of potatoes would term it, "humbugged" for some minutes with a sham wrestle between them.

But let us return to a methodical review of the rules in question. As for the first part of the ninth rule, those spectators that are well acquainted with wrestling, need not be told that when the men called upon get together, and whisper to each other before they prepare themselves for a contest, there is no anxiety respecting the result of it; for if they should then happen to be in earnest, the spectators are never satisfied that they are so. But if the umpire be privy to their conversation, it is a very different matter, as it then becomes his duty to debar them from imposing upon the spectators by a sham wrestle; and if no contest takes place, he is then fully aware what is the reason of it, and whether any blame can be imputed to the stander; for if one party will not wrestle, he certainly cannot be forced to it, and in that case, as the stander has committed no fault, he is fully entitled to the fall. For, if a distinguished hero fall in against an infe-

rior opponent, who is fully aware that he has no chance of success, and therefore will not try, it is by no means reasonable the stander should hazard a second chance in that round. The umpire ought not on any account to suffer those who eventually stand, to make a direct proposition to the other to lay down; but instances may occur in which he may in some degree be implicated, and the transaction may receive the sanction of the umpire; for example, a man may get a sprain, or some other injury in the preceding round, which may incapacitate him from immediate active exertion; and a proposal coming from him may be agreed to by the other, in case he should win a prize, without any reasonable exception being made to it. Or, it may sometimes happen, a man may win two or three good falls, and then be so much over-matched in size and strength, that even a majority of the spectators would rather wish him to receive an acknowledgment, however small, than see him risk a fall with so unequal an opponent. For instance, last year at Carlisle, if we mistake not, Waters, a young man not more than eighteen or nineteen years of age, and about eleven stone in weight, after wrestling uncommonly well, fell in against Weightman! We are so far from thinking the spectators could have derived any gratification from witnessing so unequal a contest, that we believe a great majority of those acquainted with the circumstance were much better pleased Waters did not attempt to wrestle him; and if Weightman had agreed to give him anything for not wrestling him, so far from being offended, the spectators would have deemed it an honourable and manly act. Respecting the latter part of the ninth rule, no agreement about the division of a prize between two wrestlers, provided they both do their best, can possibly affect the spectators; and therefore they undoubtedly ought to have full liberty to modulate it as they think most desirable and advantageous to themselves.

As the ninth rule specifies that no agreement shall be permitted without the sanction of the umpire, the tenth proceeds to state that if such an agreement be made, the offender shall be subjected

to such an award, as the umpire (who ought to be perfectly acquainted with the offence, and therefore a competent judge of the matter) shall deem most eligible, or equitable. This is a most important desideratum in these rules; as the circumstance of two wrestlers entering into an agreement between themselves without any visible cause, though it has often been depreciated, both by those who gave the prize, and the spectators in general, yet except in a very few instances, no punishment has been awarded for it, (notwithstanding it has always been considered very unfair) for which reason the wrestlers conceive they have a right to act just as they think proper. One bad precedent establishes another, and therefore no palpable deviation from what is just and reasonable ought to be allowed. A notice of any intended meeting always particularizes what is the object of it. Thus in wrestling, it is always mentioned that such a prize will be given to wrestle for. Provided the sum be given, no matter whether it be by one particular person or by a number, the object is always the same, namely, to bring a number of people together, from whose attendance some advantage, emolument, or consequence is expected to be ultimately derived. Such an assemblage have an undoubted right to witness what was the object of their attendance; therefore, any proceeding tending to deprive them of that right is an infringement upon the original notice of that meeting. Now, can any person be stupid enough to argue, that when the greatest expectation is excited by the meeting of two good wrestlers, it should be balked by an agreement to divide the prize without a contest? Such an agreement, while it thwarts the very object of the meeting, adds nothing to, but rather detracts from, the reputation of the men who do it. If renown were the inducement which occasioned either of them to become a wrestler, it is not to be acquired by compromising every fall in which there is danger of coming off second best. Where there is no danger, there can be no honour. On the other hand, there can be no honour lost when a man does his best; and an agreement without some sufficient motive, certainly implies something cowardly. If money be

the object of a man's entering the ring, if he offer a part, to obtain a greater part, or the whole, it is but reasonable he should earn it, and when there is no odd man to defeat his mercenary motive, a power ought to exist somewhere to frustrate the intentions of a man whose interest leads him to disappoint those who gave the prize, and the many for whose amusement it was given; and such power can nowhere be vested so judiciously as with the umpire.

Having now methodically laid down rules which embrace every incident that can arise from the men's first entering the ring till the prize is won, we shall not tire our readers with many further comments upon them at this time. At a future period of this work, some allusions will be made to nearly all of them. At present we shall only observe, that any deviation we have made from old-established custom bears somewhat harder upon the wrestlers, and therefore may be supposed more conducive to the gratification of the spectators, and, consequently, to promote the object for which prizes are given.

It is manifest to those who wish well to the exercise, that if the dividing system prevail to any great extent, it will eventually occasion the suspension of giving money to wrestle for altogether; therefore we conceive it to be much better to check the evil in its infancy, lest it destroy the celebrity of the amusement it was meant to promote.

We shall now, for the better information of those spectators not conversant either in the practice or theory of wrestling, as well as of those who wish to become so, devote a few pages to the explanation of those terms usually applied to the methods which are used in the art, or, to speak more intelligibly to our less knowing readers, the different methods of striking, or assailing an opponent, so as to effect the desired object of bringing him down, generally termed throwing him by the spectators, but by some hardy and unrefined practisers of the exercise, broadly, and we must own, rather brutally called felling him. These methods are much more various and complicated in close-hold wrestling than in any other mode; which diversity we conceive to be a strong proof of the superiority of this exercise to

any other, which indeed is evinced by the great interest it never has failed to excite; a diversity which must be regarded as characteristic of something noble and manly, as it can be occasioned only by a contest of men. The most general and usual methods are those which follow:—

Throwing men by lifting them from off the ground, and rapidly placing one of the knees between their thighs, is now become very common all over Cumberland and Westmorland. It, was however, very little known between the rivers Derwent and Duddon till within these last twenty years. It is generally called hipeing, we conceive from the supposed great use of the hip in the execution of it. There is, however, too essential a difference in the modes of practising it for any general agreement in the propriety of the term. An explanation of one or two of these modes may serve to elucidate the point, give the reader some idea as to the propriety of the term, and enable him to ascertain the accuracy of our definition of it.

When immediately on lifting, the knee and thigh are thrown in, and forced upwards, so that quickly wheeling the whole frame to the contrary side, the assailant is enabled when turning his man with his arms, and delivering him from his breast, to pitch him with his hip, (which will then be close against the lower part of his opponent's belly) in such a manner, that not being able to catch the ground with either foot, he is thrown upon his back; an operation which requires a close hold, and great rapidity in the execution of it; we conceive it may with propriety be provincially called hipeing. Thomas Richardson, of Hesket, commonly called the dyer, is allowed to be one, if not the very best hiper among the present list of Cumbrian wrestlers.

But when on lifting the superior length of the assailant enables him to throw his leg so high that his opponent is turned by the action of the knee, against the inside of his thigh, and the simultaneous effort of the arms and breast, as was generally practised by the celebrated William Wilson, of Ambleside, we conceive the proper appellation to be, inside striking. That this is quite a different mode

from what we have termed hipeing, is still more evident by some wrestlers lifting their man, and waiting some time for an opportunity; when this is the case, the fall is usually occasioned by the knee, aided by the dexterous management of the arms only, and does not require the men being so close to each other as hipeing. This method is now become very common, and if the term striking can be as properly as it is commonly applied to wrestling, we think it can admit of no definition but an inside stroke.

It is an invariable maxim, that when a man is determined to make play, the sooner he does it, and the quicker he is in doing it, the greater will be his chance of succeeding. To guard against an inside stroke, or hipe, the defendant should if possible keep himself on the ground. To do this, he must either lift against his opponent, or slackening his own hold, endeavour by wrenching his body from his opponent's grasp to plant himself, as it were, to the ground, striving at the same time to keep his opponent off with his breast, and if possible to shrink it underneath his assailant's. If he succeed in this latter mode, he should be on the alert to secure such a hold, when his opponent attacks him, (when he cannot do without in some measure giving his body within the compass of his grasp) as will ensure him of victory. It is true a skilful wrestler will be very careful when he hazards an attack to keep his right arm well up, to prevent his opponent getting a low hold of him; but still if he does not succeed, one equally skilful will inevitably gain some advantage by it, such as catching his heel, mending his hold, or attacking him in turn before he can recover his balance. If the defendant cannot prevent his opponent from lifting him, he must endeavour, by shrinking his body, to give him the greatest weight upon his breast he possibly can, and instantaneously try to fix his knees and feet so as to prevent the assailant from getting his knee between his thighs, and at the same time, so as fully to inform himself of every meditated movement the moment it is attempted. If he thus succeeds in checking the first assault, and

be equal, or nearly so to the assailants, he ought to win the fall. As these observations will, with some trifling deviations, apply to lifting in general, we shall not have occasion to dwell much in future upon that particular subject.

The methods of assailing a man on either side are various. They may however be reduced to the four principal ones, namely: striking with the knee, the leg, the foot, and the leg and foot alternately. The first is done by striking with great pith and force with either of the knees, though generally the left, against the outside of an opponent's knee or thigh; and by the force of the stroke, and the correspondent movement of the arms, first force him from, and then turn him upon the ground. Slee, of Dacre, who won the prize at Penrith races in the year 1813, was, in our judgment, the best at this stroke of any man we ever saw practice it. Sometimes it is made use of after lifting, by throwing the knee outside an opponent's thigh; a method we have *in propria personæ* often practised with great success. The second is generally termed in and out, owing to striking out with the leg, so that the knee of the assailant is outside his opponent's, and the foot inside his ancle, or small of the leg, thus placing a kind of lock upon the knee and leg. This is a very common mode with many first-rate, as well as inferior wrestlers. The third mode is usually called a chip, and is effected by trying to swing an opponent round, and strike the wrist of the foot against the outside of his leg or ancle, or as in the preceding mode, by doing so, and turning him with the assistance of the arms; a method which Thomas Golightly (now no more) excelled in, and in which we have seen Nicholson himself evince much dexterity. It in general requires more dexterity than any of the preceeding modes. The fourth is effected by striking an antagonist from the ground with the leg, either outside, or in and out, with the assistance of the arms; and instantly planting that foot upon the ground, strike with the other across his farther shin before he reaches the ground. This stroke requires great quickness and activity, and is, when well exe-

cuted, one of the surest and neatest methods of wrestling practised. The best and cleanest practiser of this mode we ever knew, or heard of, was William Ponsonby, of Endside, near Egremont, who retired from the ring nearly twenty years ago. He displayed such uncommon dexterity in this stroke, that his feet might frequently have been heard at a considerable distance succeeding each other against his opponent's legs like two distinct claps of the hand; it is at the present time by no means unusual.

Although we have classed outside striking under four principal heads, yet it is to be observed that the occasions on which they are resorted to are extremely various; being often used as sufficient of themselves, sometimes as precursors to other meditated attacks, and not unfrequently, subsequent to other movements. As a clear explanation of their nature, and the different modes of using them, are a sufficient means of information to enable any practiser of wrestling to judge what are the surest methods of guarding against them, it is unnecessary to detain our readers any longer on this particular subject.

When one party gets a leg behind an opponent's it is called haming, or catching his heel, according to the manner in which it is done. If the legs are intertwined with each other, or if the heel of the assailant is above the small of the defendant's leg, it is usually termed haming; for no other reason that we can divine, except from the strength required in the ham, either for accelerating, or defending the attack. Sometimes a ham is practised at the moment of taking hold, or when taken off the ground, by rapidly striking the heel behind the knee; as the sinews of the person lifting are then at full stretch, if the party lifted do it forcibly, and can throw the full weight of his body along with it, it is often effective. Hamming, as well as catching the heel, is indiscriminately practised, either as attacks of themselves, or as auxiliaries to other attacks.

To guard against a ham, the defendant should feel his feet firm upon the ground, slack his hold, and bear forward with his breast against the assailant's. If he succeed in this, he should endeavour if the ham be persevered in, to turn or twist his op-

ponent over by wheeling him off his breast to the opposite side, as he will have only one leg on the ground; but should he quit the ham, no time should be lost in closing the hands lower down upon his back, and becoming the assailant in turn.

Catching the heel is often quite a different operation; its object generally is to force the foot forward by rapidly striking the heel, or ancle of the defendant. Should it not prove immediately effective, yet if the defendant staggers, and ultimately falls by not being able to extricate himself from it, it is usually called hankering the heel. Catching the heel may be practised either on the outside, or inside; and if done with force and quickness, it is a very difficult manœuvre to guard against, and a wrestler known to be expert in catching, or hankering, is generally as little fancied for an opponent, as one skilled in any other mode whatever. Thomas Nicholson, of Threlkeld, who won at Carlisle for three successive years, was a forcible illustrator of this mode. He was certainly uncommonly good at it, and though by no means wanting in many other modes, yet he was more indebted to this method for victory than all the rest put together. There is another mode somewhat similar to these last mentioned, by which falls, particularly among new beginners, or novices, are often decided. This may be termed twining over the knee, as it is effected by getting the knee outside and twining an opponent over it.

It is not our intention to dwell much upon what is often indiscriminately termed hanching, henching, hipping, buttocking, or crossbuttocking, as they are all effected in nearly the same manner; and in fact, whatever they may be fancically called, the breast and side are oftentimes, though not always, as much used as the hip, or what is the most general appellation, the buttock. A man skilled in this method of wrestling generally strives for a loose hold, and it is the left side which is mostly used for effecting the desired object. By stepping partly in, and crossways with the left foot, twining the body in, and throwing the buttock underneath the belly, the defendant is by the assailant's arms being kept tight round his neck, or shoulders, hoisted on, and thrown

off, or over the side, or buttock; as the latter is by the act of stepping thrown farthest in, it has acquired the name of buttocking; and when the leg or foot gets quite across the defendant's body, of crossbuttocking; though even then it is evident, unless the effort was seconded by the arms and higher part of the body, the act of throwing the leg across would be fatal to the aggressor. Sometimes when the assailant perceives, or feels his man staggered, or balanced as to be able to strike with one of his feet across the shins; when this is done the fall is often clean and effective. At other times the situation admits of getting the leg, or foot, behind both of the defendant's; when this happens it is in some places called grandystepping. It sometimes happens that the assailant, by turning in quickly with very loose holds, gets into a position exactly before, or with his back to his opponent; in that case, if he do not, by keeping his hands fast, and stooping forward throw him over his head and shoulders, his situation is a dangerous one for losing the fall. In short the modes of assault and defence in this most manly of all exercises are so diversified that a volume might be filled by illustrating that part of our subject only. The act of buttocking, slipping from the side, or breast, and, in fact, of everything that constitutes the science of wrestling, depends much upon the different situations which may occur in a contest; and the judgment formed by feeling with the chest, and breast, what kind of assault is most likely to prove effective; and generally speaking, quickness in assault, and promptitude in judiciously availing himself of any circumstance that may arise during the struggle, may be called the distinguishing characteristics of a good and scientific wrestler.

Opinions respecting the best mode of standing when taking hold are no doubt various, and the particular method of wrestling usually adopted by the antagonist to be encountered, in order to counteract his intention as well as keeping in view the method he himself excells in, will always have some influence on every judicious wrestler. In the rule solely devoted to the purpose of obliging those to take hold who cannot themselves agree about it, we found it

absolutely necessary to fix some standard for regulating the hold. Any wrestler need not be told that the subject is the most difficult one that could arise; and that one certain standard only was indispensible. Making proper allowance for any man's mode of wrestling, except it be in an extreme of tight (the usual epithet for a close or fast hold) or slack, we are fully prepared to maintain that the standard we have fixed on is the best and most judicious that can be adopted. It is usual for men wishing to take more than a fair hold to shrink their own breasts underneath their opponents', and pin his arm to his side, close to the elbow;—the merest novice in the art will not permit this, and yet the shorter man will sometimes argue they ought to stand straight up! Knee to knee is sometimes with equal absurdity proposed; for unless the men are of equal dimensions upwards, it does not in the least alter the subject of the dispute. A hat, or a stick, is often laid down, and the men are required to bring their toes up to the mark. The monstrous absurdity of the ridiculous position this will place men of different sizes in, with their feet close together, and what is sometimes jocosely termed the seat of honour of the taller man hung back, needs no comment. No certain distance between the toes can be equally applicable to all; and therefore the distance which will admit of both feeling themselves at ease, and firmly on the ground, may soon be settled between them with the assistance of the umpire, as breast to breast is the only mode of placing them on an equal footing. Many wrestlers are fond of leaning to the left side, a habit acquired while in their novitiate by the desire of seeing their opponent's feet, or at least his right foot. This latter circumstance is of no material advantage of itself, as it is the *feel*, and not the *sight*, which generally regulates the movements of a good wrestler, especially at the commencement of a contest, as is sufficiently evident from the fact that one man, decidedly the master of another, will throw him blindfolded. This lean to the left, as with many it is a supposed advantage, and therefore often a considerable obstacle to their getting hold, is worthy of some consideration in regard to its utility, both in

assaulting and defending; and, therefore, though a dry and complex subject to some of our readers, yet as many wrestlers will deem it both important and interesting, it is our duty to attempt some elucidation of the subject.

It must be sufficiently evident to all, that leaning to either side is a deviation from the natural and true centre of balance; and of course will lay some stress upon, or partly brace the muscles of the opposite side. Thus if the lean be to the left side, the muscles of the right, from the neck to the foot downwards, will be proportionably braced, as those on the left are contracted in with the body; and part of the weight of the body, by being thrown upon the right arm of the opponent, will detract in a corresponding degree from the weight upon, or firmness of, the feet upon the ground. Now it is certain that the easier and firmer any wrestler feels himself upon the ground, the less stress there will be upon the arms and breast; and that when all the powers of the frame can at once be brought effectively into action, the more vigorous will be the attack. It is to be remarked, that these obstacles apply even to an attack with the left leg; while the lean being from the right, must of course greatly detract from the force of any intended effort to throw an opponent on that side; and the position itself totally precludes the idea of an effective buttock; because instead of facilitating the act of getting the foot partly across, or the foot partly underneath, it acts in the very reverse, by contributing to place the body on the outside,—an unavoidable consequence of the lean. As for buttocking with the right side there are very few who ever attempt it, except it is after an outside stroke with the left leg; because, in taking hold, the left leg is always above the right; and consequently, when the hold is loose, there is no material obstacle to prevent that side from being thrown in; whereas, the right arm being underneath the oxter, prevents that side from being brought into action with equal freedom and facility; notwithstanding this, there are some few who contrive to throw in the right side with considerable effect; yet against a good wrestler it must always be considered a losing chance.

It is observable that these remarks apply to the act of taking hold before the contest is begun. The lean to the left acquired after, or during a struggle, is quite a different thing. It is then a certain sign, either that the opponent has lost all command of the hold, or that both parties have their arms round each others neck. If the former be the case, it necessarily implies that the party who has the lean has broke his opponent's hold,—has himself got a commanding one,—is standing perfectly at ease,—and is nearly sure of the fall; while his adversary, scarcely able to preserve an upright position and without hold, is incapable of making any offensive effort which is likely to succeed. The only thing he can do is to attempt to get his side in, and try to buttock; but the other, perfectly aware of his movements, will probably catch him under the ribs, and often dispose of him with ease and safety. If both parties have lost hold of the back, he who has the lean is much more advantageously situated than his opponent; he stands freer with his neck, and easier with his body; and is consequeutly more at liberty to assault or defend with a much greater prospect of success.

As the two most important objects in wrestling, namely, hold, and feeling with the breast, are in that situation of comparatively little consequence, a view of the right leg becomes an object of some consideration, as it implies the fact of the right arm being more up, and the left more down, than his antagonist's (if the men have any hold) can possibly be; as the left buttock is then the only attack that his opponent can make, and which he cannot make without moving the right leg. On the other hand, the person possessing the lean is by no means in so confined a situation. By standing perfectly at ease, he can choose his time of assault, or is fully prepared to avail himself of any effort his antagonist can make; and if he be a good striker with the left leg across the shin, he has every chance of doing so with success; which he ought not to defer doing, lest his antagonist should wrench his head loose, and thus oblige him to forfeit his advantage by taking a fresh hold.

Having thus proved that leaning to one side when the men are supposed to be on equal terms, and acquiring a commanding lean after the contest is begun, are two very different things, it remains for us to consider the advantage, or disadvantage, of the lean to the left side, as it regards the efficacy of repelling, or guarding an attack. As this lean, which implies laying an additional weight upon an opponent's right arm at the commencement of a contest, when the holds are, or ought to be, equally low round the arm and body, cannot be done without detracting from the firmness of the feet upon the ground, must apparently impede the act of guarding, either a judicious stroke, or buttock, for although it may be a preventative to his being turned to the right side by an outside stroke with the left leg; yet it must proportionably facilitate his being turned to the left side, by the left leg inside, or by the right outside; and hanging his weight to the left side, so far from the centre of balance, is certainly the very thing a good buttocker, or slipper from the breast, would desire. It likewise is not, as some imagine, any obstacle to his being lifted from the ground; because by hanging his weight downwards, he has not an immediate command of his strength to counteract the lift of his opponent; and instead of bearing him forward with his breast and arms, he has one hanging upon him, and the other closely locked round him. His antagonist, so far from having an additional weight to lift, has only the same weight in a more favourable position for lifting it; because, having the greater part already, he has only that part to raise higher, and the other comes by degrees upon him, and the weight he has to sustain is close to him; whereas, were his antagonist lifting, or bearing against him, the weight would come upon him at once, and would be farther from him. Again, the weight of a man is so far from being equal to his strength, that if no impediment were thrown in the way by lifting against, or bearing forward with the arms and breast, a man ten stone weight would easily lift one of twenty. When lifted, the lean is an evident disadvantage, as it tends to throw him

from the exact front of his opponent; it must of course be a considerable impediment to clapping the knees, or legs, close upon him to prevent his striking out, and feeling in what manner, and with what leg, he intends to do it.

Having discussed this point fully, and we hope satisfactorily to the experienced wrestler, we will offer a few short remarks upon the hold recommended in the third rule. It is surely a most important and desirable thing, that the same method of taking hold should prevail throughout this and the adjacent counties; because by practising in some places with loose, and in others with tight holds, when they meet for some considerable prize, no hold satisfactory to all parties can be obtained. This evidently compelled the author of any treatise on the subject to lay down some one particular manner to be resorted to as a standard, when any dispute occurred. The one which seemed to us best adapted to this difficult point, is, as we have before remarked in our observations upon it, such a one as the tight-hold wrestler may gather with, or strike from; and at the same time, one which does not prevent the loose-hold wrestler from making use of his own peculiar mode. Such a medium between the two extremes, is the thing evidently calculated to compromise the subject of dispute. As the parties are equally standing without inclining to either side, exactly fronting each other, at liberty to breathe freely, and feeling each other by the junction of their breasts, all characteristics of a fair, and which cannot exist in an unfair hold; they are at full, and equal liberty to attack with vigour, and every part of the frame may at once be promptly combined to repel, and on the alert to take any advantage which may present itself in consequence of, the attack.

But still, after all that can be said respecting the superiority of any particular method of taking hold, considerable practice, and attachment to almost any, will render a man very dexterous in it. Accordingly we see many acknowledged first-rate wrestlers differ as much in their notions of taking hold as in their methods of assault and defence. Thus, Thomas Nicholson and Thomas Todd, two of the best wrest-

lers of their weight in Cumberland, and saying this, we conceive we might safely add the United Kingdom, or the world; are, or were, both upright standers; while William Richardson, of Caldbeck, (commonly called Ritson) the winner of more prizes than any other man in the kingdom, was partial to the lean; and John Louden, from the vicinity of Keswick, a first-rate, and a most dangerous customer, was never satisfied without it. As these men, and many others will, in our review of wrestling, again come under consideration, the further mention of them in this place would be superfluous.

Finally, the circumstance of taking hold, while it is the most frequent cause of dissension among wrestlers, is at the same time, the most difficult for an impartial spectator, or umpire, to form a correct and decisive judgment upon. The biassed and interested spectator, and the well-wishers of either party, are often determined not to be convinced that the fault originates with their favourite. This being the case, those who give the prize, ought always promptly to enforce the judgment of the umpire whom they have chosen. The rule for deciding the hold, notwithstanding the difficulty of the subject, is, we hope, sufficiently intelligible to any man who is competent to fulfil the arduous situation of acting as umpire. Being fully conscious, that as harmony and unanimity ought to be the distinguished characteristics of an amusement, we could not be too explicit, or minute, on the point which tends most to interrupt them, such a consideration could alone have induced us to treat everything relative to the subject of taking hold in so lengthy a manner; but feeling as we do, that the frequency and splendour of the prizes given to wrestle for will be considerably influenced by the cordiality displayed by the wrestlers towards each other, it appeared to us an indispensable duty to give this particular subject a full consideration, as shrinking from it would have implied an inability to treat of it, a stigma, we possess egotism enough to believe we by no means merit.

In commencing a review of modern wrestling, and corresponding memoirs of the most celebrated wrestlers, it is highly necessary to fix some particular date from which we can gradually descend to the present time. In doing so it will not be expected that in so limited a work as this we should either fix upon a very remote era, or have been at the trouble and expense of collecting every minutiæ of the subject we treat of. In fixing an era, it would be neither instructive nor amusing to go farther back than those transactions which are well remembered by many persons now living, who were themselves wrestlers, and other actors in the scenes we have heard them describe. To go farther back would be mere hearsay, and from such partial authority no certain information could be obtained further than that there was wrestling, and consequently wrestlers, in our grandfathers' time. This we already know, as we have in the first part of this treatise proved there were both nearly from the creation of the world. We could indeed give names much antecedent to the date we shall fix upon, but as we could add no further information than that they were very strong men, and as far as we can collect, strength, and not science, was in those days the great essential towards victory, our doing so would be merely nominal. As to the trouble and expense of collecting information, we frankly own we have been at none. We speak from our own knowledge, and from such corresponding information as insures the correctness of everything we shall state as matter of fact. During the many years we were attached to this hardy and athletic exercise :—

"The men who threw us, and the men we threw"

could not fail to perfect us in the practice of the ring; and the number of veteran wrestlers, and veteran amateurs, we conversed with, who :—

"Our memory stor'd with feats of valour done,
And youth recalling, told how belts were won,"

gave us an equal claim to understand the theory of the business; and consequently we scruple not to say, we believe ourselves as well acquainted with the various interesting particulars comprised in such a review as any one person whatever.

About forty-five years ago, or about the year 1778, back-hold wrestling was more practised, and in higher estimation in that extent of country which comprises the borders of Cumberland, Westmorland, Yorkshire, and Northumberland, than in any other place in England or Scotland. Since those days of our fathers, great indeed is the change effected in the habits, customs, and manners of all classes of people throughout England; and no part of it more than in the north. The festivities of Christmas, the hilarities of sheep-shearing, and other seasons of mirth and jollity, are now but the mere shadow of what they were, even at the short distance of time we treat of. Though some dainties, neither much known nor wanted in those days, are now in common use, yet home-brewed, that soul and cementer of good fellowship, so often spoken of in raptures by the aged, has nearly disappeared. At that time, if money was more scarce, ale was better and cheaper; and pastimes were not only more frequent, but enjoyed with much less care for to-morrow. Accordingly, on the borders of these counties, prizes of different descriptions were frequently given to wrestle for. Although a belt was the most usual prize, yet silver cups, leather breeches, and other things of considerable value, accompanied by a belt, were by no means uncommon. Of all the excellent wrestlers at that period, Adam Dodd was the most distinguished. He was by trade a miller, and was brought up, or at least resided for a number of years, at Longwathby Mill. As this village on Christmas or New Year's Day, and Melmerby on Midsummer's Day, was the scene of the two most distinguished annual contests, this hero lived in the centre of those places where the greatest number of prizes were given. It is considered by many who were acquainted with Adam, that he won more prizes than any other man, either remembered at that period, or who has since appeared in the ring. From the best and most authentic accounts we have been able to collect concerning him, we think he yielded in that respect to William Richardson, of Caldbeck. Our reasons for this opinion are founded on the following facts:— Richardson was a wrestler, and a most distinguished

one, for twice the number of years it was possible for Adam to enjoy much celebrity; Richardson wrestled throughout a more extensive range of country, and was more in the habit of frequenting sports, than we believe Adam was. And again, Richardson carried away many prizes from places where there were few opponents (and sometimes none) to encounter a wrestler of his prowess; whereas, in Adam's time, almost every prize was keenly contested. But giving Richardson the preference in this respect, we give it as our candid opinion, that Dodd must have been the better wrestler. Indeed from the concurrent testimony of all who knew him, it was universally admitted by the old men at that period, that no wrestler in their remembrance had ever equalled him in what is now termed science and action; nor are the men who were contemporaries with him, willing to admit that any of our modern wrestlers would have stood on equal terms with him, but this latter assertion ought to be received with caution. It is both usual and natural for age to be garrulous and eloquent concerning the "*days of lang syne.*" For our part we have known, and yet know, some whom we thought able to wrestle anything of their height and weight; but we confess, that so high was the renown of this distinguished champion, that we scarcely know how to make up our mind concerning the truth of this doctrine. Adam, though not termed a big one, was yet far above the middle size of wrestlers. He was between five feet ten and five feet eleven inches high, and weighed near fourteen stones; belonging to that class in which we have elsewhere stated the most distinguished wrestlers and pugilists were to be found. He has been described to us as a clean and well built man; but withal rather flattish bodied, and slender backed for such a distinguished wrestler; this is said by some to have been the only thing that prevented him from being invincible. He was a straight stander, and easy to satisfy with a hold, but the moment it was taken, eager to be at work, and seldom desisted from the attack till the fall was over. He seldom had recourse to the buttock; striking was his forte; and his dexterity and method of

parting, or what is often provincially called livering (a contraction of delivering) his man, was such, that he seldom either missed his object, or went to the ground. His favourite method was the outside, and he was partial to feinting with one foot, and striking with the other. However on striking out, he often seconded the attack with the foot he feinted with; and we have heard it asserted he struck uncommonly high. In this his trade as a miller might be advantageous to him. From frequent practice in lifting and removing loads with his arms, in which the knee and foot are sometimes used as auxiliaries, he might have acquired more strength in the leg when striking out, and felt less incommoded when balancing and turning his man, than if he had been brought up to almost any other trade. It would be impossible for us, or any other person at this period, to enumerate a tithe of his victories, suffice it to observe, he was the hero of his day, and at the great annual meetings at Longwathby, and Melmerby, as well as at Alston, often threw, not only the most noted wrestlers of the neighbourhood, and the borders of Cumberland and Westmorland, but all the dons from Yorkshire and Northumberland who came to try their prowess with him. It would be foolish to assert, or lead any person to suppose he was not occasionally thrown; for that is a thing, which, like "time and tide," happeneth to all men; but we believe we shall not be contradicted, when we say he ranked the very first on the list. He was a remarkably civil and peaceable man; and his conduct and character through life accorded with these two essential recommendations to respect and esteem, having never been called in question on any occasion. His death was occasioned by incautiously lying down to sleep upon the kiln when drying some oats, which brought on an illness that proved fatal a short time afterwards, whilst in the very prime of life. He died about the year 1782, leaving a widow then with child, having entered into the connubial state not long before his decease.

The next hero to Adam Dodd, in point of renown, at that period, and in that vicinity, was Thomas Johnston, who has for a great number of years been in the employ of J. C. Curwen, Esq., of Workington Hall, as a labourer and husbandman. It is a very dubious point whether Tom has not, from wrestling in a more extensive sphere, and labouring longer in the vocation, won as great a number of prizes as Adam did. When these two heroes met, there was nothing like certainty as to the event of the contest, Tom having both thrown and been thrown by Adam; although we surmise the odds were in favour of the latter circumstance. However, with that one exception, we are warranted, from a multiplicity of accounts, in ranking Tom Johnston superior to any other man in a wide range of country, in which he long reigned the most distinguished champion. Amongst those whom he has vanquished, Tom, with considerable pride, sometimes mentions the celebrated Abraham Brown, who was for many years curate of Egremont. Johnston was a fourteen stone man, and stood near six feet high, was extremely well made, and consequently an equal opponent for any man whatever. He was, we believe, no buttocker; and was most partial to the ham, and hankering the heel, in which modes he excelled all the heroes of his day. Johnston, like a true sportsman, still relishes the crack of the whip, and actually carried the belt from off the Cloffick, at Workington, at one of the great meetings on Easter Tuesday, when nearly sixty years of age. Tom Johnston is in himself a contradiction to the foolish, but common received opinion, that wrestling is so injurious to the frame, that it destroys the constitution in a very few years, and brings on so many aches, and rheumatic pains, that many believe a wrestler, when advanced in years, must necessarily be a cripple. So far are we from coinciding in this opinion, that as far as we are able to judge, we have reason to believe it a healthful and strengthening exercise. We may be laughed at for such an opinion but facts are stubborn things, and we challenge any man who differs from us in that opinion, to produce a younger and healthier-looking man of his age than William

Richardson, who has won more prizes, we believe, than any man in existence. In fact, many of the idle stories respecting the terrific consequences are mere chimeras, originating with those who know nothing about it, and credited only by those who have no opportunity of judging for themselves.

Another celebrated hero, at the same period, was Thomas Lee, who we are informed is at this present time a publican in Alston. Lee, we have been told, was from the borders of Northumberland, and was the unrivalled cock of the walk for many miles round him, both as a wrestler and pugilist. The fame of Adam Dodd continually ringing in his ears, inflamed him with an ardent desire to try conclusions with him. Accordingly, regarding minor conquests as beneath him, and believing himself nearly invincible, he set off in quest of Adam to a meeting of such celebrity as to insure the attendance of that hero. We have heard some assert that it was at Longwathby, but we have undoubted authority for saying it was at Great Salkeld, that these heroes first met. However this may be, it is certain that they both fought and wrestled. The issue of the former contest was not unfavourable to Adam, although there are many who maintain that it was the only pugilistic contest in which he was ever engaged; and that it way only to prevent the imputation of being a coward that induced him to fight. In wrestling, Adam proved the master; and this we are told Lee is still willing to acknowledge, but entertains an opinion that he was the better man in the other respect. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that Lee was a very noted man, and superior to his opponent in strength and weight. John Horsley, or Ortley, yet living in Alston, was likewise a very powerful man; and though not considered an equal match for Adam Dodd, threw him for a pair of new leather breeches given by J. Richardson, Esq., on his coming of age.

Bampton school, on the borders of Westmorland, was perhaps the most celebrated seminary in England for turning out good wrestlers. It was usual at that period for those designed for the church, or any learned profession, to frequent school when

grown up to manhood; and if a young man was known to be a Bampton scholar, it was considered conclusive of his being a good wrestler. Among those educated at this instructive seminary whose genius led them to acquire a competent knowledge of the bodily powers of man, before they were honoured with the charge of his more important requisites, was the reverend and celebrated Abraham Brown, whom we have before alluded to. This gentleman was the first of whom we have any authentic records of excelling as a buttocker. Having lost no time in perfecting himself in this manly exercise when a scholar, he fully maintained the character of a very first rate, when acting in the more exalted situations of usher and schoolmaster in different places; and occasionally after he became a curate. When a very young man he acquired great renown in carrying away a silver cup of considerable value from Eamont Bridge, which divides the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, and which was consequently in the very centre of the most noted wrestling country in England. After his establishment at Egremont, Mr. Brown had no objection, in the spirit of good fellowship, to oblige any man who felt extremely anxious for a trial of skill with him, and in these casual turn-ups it s said he was never vanquished. Abraham being a man of considerable humour, and good nature, palmed himself more than once, as a friend of Parson Brown's, on men, who hearing of his celebrity, expressed a strong desire to try a fall with him. On such occasions he pretended to be well acquainted with the parson, and assured them that if they could throw him easily, they would prove a match for Brown, when they met with him. This of course caused a contest, and Master Abraham, after giving them full satisfaction, would advise them to go home, as he could assure them they were not able to vanquish the parson. We have heard him assert that when nineteen years of age, he did not weigh more than twelve stones, but a stranger to him in his younger days would have judged of him very differently. He could not be less than six feet high, and when at a proper age

for entering the church, must have weighed fifteen stones at least. This well known character died within the last twelve months, and it is but justice to his memory to observe, that though occasionally addicted to the bottle, he preserved through life, both in his public and private character, the regard and esteem, not only of his parishioners in general, but of nearly all who were acquainted with him.

Quitting the borders of the county at present, we will revert to the borders of Holm Cultram. In that part of Cumberland, flourished at that time, the greatest hero in a diversity of athletic exercises, England ever produced This was the well known John Tinian, who as a wrestler, boxer, runner, leaper, cudgel, and football player, never met with an equal. It was no uncommon circumstance for Tinian to bear away all the three prizes, viz, belt, hat, and gloves, from the neighbouring races; which feat he once performed at Penrith where he was totally unknown, defeating in these different exercises, the very best of the border heroes. He was about six feet high, and fourteen stone weight; an uncommonly powerful and muscular man, regarded as a desperado, and looked upon as the cock of the walk wherever he went. John Tinian is yet living, and some of his sons turned out promising chicks, though by no means equal to the old cock. His brother Job was equally well known. Job was no apology for a man, standing about six feet six inches high, and weighing accordingly; was remarkable in-kneed, and had little of an Adonis about him at any time, but more especially when, as was frequently the case, he stripped off all his clothes, and exposed himself to his opponent in a state of nudity. Notwithstanding his size, and terrific appearance, he was not considered equal to his brother John in any respect; and William Richardson, of Caldbeck, when a mere stripling, ventured to wrestle him the best of three falls. Richardson threw him cleanly the first fall, but was worsted in the second and third. Had Richardson been a few years older, there is little doubt but he would have gained an easy conquest; and probably in wrestling have been more than a

match for John himself, supposing they had both been in their prime. Job died some years ago.

Taking leave for the present of the eastern side of Derwent, we must go westward as far as Gosforth before we find another wrestler of such celebrity as to entitle him to notice in these memoirs. In that place we find one of the most distinguished characters at that period between Derwent and Duddon, in the person of John Woodall, who was brought up as a husbandman, and succeeded his father as proprietor of a small estate in Gosforth. Woodall though not the tallest, was we believe the strongest man we have yet noticed. His person was symmetry itself; he stood about five feet eleven inches high, weighed upwards of sixteen stones, and all who knew him agree in considering that he was the strongest man in the west of Cumberland. As a wrestler, Woodall was more indebted to strength, than science; but he possessed the former requisite to such an uncommon degree, that he was considered no unequal opponent for the powerful and scientific curate of Egremont. At the King's Arms, in that place, Woodall exhibited a remarkable, and rather extraordinary specimen of his prodigious strength. Having been thrown for a prize by a shoemaker of the name of Carr, a well-known wrestler, the latter, flushied with his victory, began to ridicule Woodall on the circumstance; Woodall, though a very peaceable man, yet willing to turn the laugh against Carr, caught him up in his arms as if he had been an infant, and hung him by his breeches waistband upon one of the hooks in the ceiling! This circumstance, while it illustrates the strength of Woodall, displays in even a more prominent degree the advantages of science, which enabled Carr to throw an antagonist so very superior to him in strength. His finances being exhausted, Woodall went to sea, and was drowned in the river Liffey, near Dublin, about the year 1796.

Although wrestling still continued to be universally practised in these counties, yet the immediate successors of those heroes we have mentioned do not appear to have attained equal celebrity, as fame is comparatively silent respecting their achieve-

ments. About the year 1790, a contest often spoke of took place at Cockermouth, between William Gunson, a cooper from Calderbridge, and Richard Wright, many years a gamekeeper at Brayton Hall. They were both very powerful men, and might be considered the champions of their respective neighbourhoods. If their science was not what would now be considered of the first order, yet the vigorous exertions of two active fifteen stone men, either of them six feet high, could not fail to render the contest very attractive. The wager, which was only trifling, was to be decided by the best of three falls. After a very manly and spirited contest, the hero from Calderbridge proved the conqueror. At a somewhat preceding period, a Cockermouth man of the name of Studdart, commonly called Leny (probably a contraction of Leonard) Studdart, was much noted for wrestling; but his notoriety was more occasioned by his prodigious strength, than by any proficiency in the science of the exercise.

Advancing forward to a more modern date, we will proceed to notice some of the most celebrated heroes at the close of the seventeenth century, or preceding the year 1800. In doing so, we must travel back to Alston and its vicinity, and introduce to the notice of our readers the very best wrestler of his weight Cumberland, or even the United Kingdom, ever produced, in the person of James, alias Jemmy Fawcett. Anxious to do ample justice to the professional character of every wrestler whose name is to be found in our pages, without detracting from the merited renown of others, we are compelled to acknowledge Jemmy must have been the most wonderful wrestler, either of his own, or any other time of which we have any succinct or authentic account. Jemmy, though yet living, is perfectly unknown to us; therefore we cannot speak positively as to his weight, which we have heard some call ten, and others ten stone seven pounds; but admitting he weighed eleven stones, the eleven-stone man who could bear away the prize for seven successive years from the most noted place of meeting, and from the acknowledged best wrestlers in Cumberland and Westmorland, must

have been a Nonpareil indeed! Yet that Jemmy Fawcett was the victor at Longwathby, the most noted annual resort, not only for the most celebrated border wrestlers, but from Alston and twenty miles round, on every Midsummer-day, does not admit of the least dispute. If Jack Randall, the pugilist, is entitled to the appellation of Nonpariel, by beating men of his own weight, and one or two a single stone heavier, what would he have been called if he could have added to the list of heroes he has vanquished the names of Cribb, Neate, and Spring? Yet, granting he had done so, he would then scarcely have had as well-merited a claim to the appellation as Fawcett, who has thrown scores of heavier men than any of the three! This single fact more establishes the superiority, as a science, of wrestling over pugilism, than volumes filled with arguments on the subject could possibly do. It likewise equally exposes the folly of those who call back-holds a mere trial of strength. Fawcett, as we have before said, weighed under, or about eleven stones, and was about five feet seven inches high, and continued wrestling occasionally till he was nearly fifty years of age; a sufficient proof that he, though a slender man, and open to all comers, did not consider wrestling as a dangerous amusement. Among the list of the many powerful men he threw, several entitled to be classed as first-raters might be produced. Nor was his superiority over such men to be attributed either to accident, or confined to the circumstance of one trial only. We contend that Fawcett must have been, and was able to throw many fourteen stone men entitled to rank as first-raters; or to come to the mark at once, men ranking as high, professionally, as any of the three pugilists alluded to: yet could Randall, although supposed to be the very best pugilist ever remembered, beat any of them? The circumstance of Fawcett being able to throw fourteen-stone men may be said to form one exception to our remark that the most superior wrestlers and pugilists will be found between thirteen and fourteen stone weight; we answer, not exactly so. We do not think Fawcett could have thrown Adam Dodd,

Thomas Nicholson, William Richardson, or some others we would select, in a number of trials; on the contrary, we are sure the odds would have been against him for a single fall; but we contend these selected wrestlers ranked higher in that exercise, than Cribb, Neate, or Spring ever did as pugilists; we would compare them to James Belcher, or the Game Chicken, when in their prime; and we presume no pugilistic amateur will say the *latter* pugilists were not considered superior to any of the present time, though some of *them* undoubtedly rank as first-raters. We must therefore conclude, that there is either more science in back-hold wrestling, than in pugilism, or that Fawcett is much more entitled to the appellation of Nonpareil than Randall. Jemmy was partial to getting his left side into action and striking from that position. It is not consistent with the limited nature of this work to dwell longer on the merits of this truly celebrated wrestler, any further than to remark, that Swaledale, in Yorkshire, was the scene of his latest exploits, and in which place we believe he is still living.

The most renowned wrestler in Westmorland at this period was John Barrow, a carpenter, who we have been told was a Cumberland man. Barrow was often employed in the vicinity of Windermere Lake, and being a very powerful man, and fully entitled to rank among the very first-raters, was considered by many a match for any man in the kingdom; and to him it is said Richardson of Caldbeck was indebted for his favourite method of striking inside. This champion, at a considerably subsequent period to his celebrity as a wrestler, was unfortunately drowned by the upsetting of a boat on Windermere Lake. It was rather remarkable that Barrow, the only person lost by the accident, was an excellent swimmer, and the only person in the boat who could swim. The accident happening at a place of no considerable depth, his foot either stuck fast in the mud, or getting entangled in some excresence attached to the bottom, he never rose to the surface of the water, and consequently perished before he could be relieved.

Among those who immediately succeeded Fawcett in the vicinity of Alston, the Golightlys (Frank and Tom), were reckoned the best men of their weight. Frank was about the size, or rather less than Jemmy, and if not equally distinguished, was nevertheless considered a very extraordinary wrestler, and gained a great number of prizes in different parts of Cumberland. Frank's usual method was a stroke or feint with the right foot, the object of which was to facilitate the means of getting his left side and buttock better in, and by so doing instantly to bring his antagonist over his head; and without his opponent, however powerful, possessed a good knowledge of the art, and was well acquainted, and consequently aware of Frank's manner, he was generally gone before he had time to recollect what he was about. We must take our leave of Frank by observing he had a strong penchant for the amusement,—was a very good one,—and never met with an accident in his pursuit of it. Thomas Golightly was not quite five feet eight inches high, but was considerably heavier than his brother, or Jemmy Fawcett, being very near a twelve stone man. Tom was an excellent wrestler when seventeen years of age, and was considered very near the head of the list in the neighbourhood of Alston. When in his prime, Tom defeated in a match the celebrated Robert Rowantree, who won the prize at Carlisle in the year 1813. He likewise distinguished himself at Melmerby, at which place he was victor one year, and came second the next. Tom, some years after he was married, emigrated westward, and, settling at Workington, wrought for a long time at that place as a coal miner in the employ of J. C. Curwen, Esq., during which time, though greatly declined from what he had been, he won many prizes, and maintained the character of an excellent wrestler. Procuring employment under the Earl of Lonsdale, Tom left Workington, and settled at Whitehaven, where notwithstanding his advanced age, his predilection for wrestling still continuing, he even then augmented the great number of prizes he had before won. After working some time at Whitehaven, Tom was instantaneously killed in one of the Howgill pits by a

tremendous fall of the roof while employed in assisting to remove a previous fall. To those more conversant with pugilism than wrestling, we will observe that Tom might be compared as a wrestler to Power, the first conqueror of Carter; being like that pugilist, a complete master of the science, and more diversified in his method of wrestling than any other man we ever knew. Tom was a very fresh and good looking man of his age; and his occupation considered, by no means addicted to idleness. In the ring, his conduct deserved, and obtained universal approbation; he always met his man with a smile, was a fair stander, and perfectly ready to accommodate his opponent, with either a tight or a slack hold. Such *was* Thomas Golightly, whose untimely death was much regretted by all who were acquainted with him.

In the vicinity of Holm Cultram wrestling at this period still preserved its consequence as an amusement. Although John Tinian was nearly told out, his sons, John and Joseph, (particularly the latter) were regarded as heroes of no ordinary stamp; but two Alston men of the name of Hall, were considered the dons of Ellenborough, Gilcrux, and the adjacent country. They were both tall active men, weighing upwards of thirteen stone, and like the majority of their countrymen, partial to buttocking. Joseph, commonly-called young Job Tinian, to distinguish him from his father, weighing when in his prime upwards of fifteen stone, and possessing uncommon strength for a man even of that weight. Job was a good buttocker, and an excellent striker; and if his capabilities as a guarder, and quick wrestler, had corresponded with these great essentials, he would have been a match for any man in the county. In the vicinity of Cockermouth, two brothers of the name of Allison, long ruled the roast; and many persons in that neighbourhood are of opinion, that though lighter men than the generality of those we have noticed, very few in either county were able to throw them. Joseph Allison (or Allanson) the more noted of them, is not above five feet eight inches high, and might be something above twelve stones in weight. Joseph was partial to a tight

hold, was a good striker, and we believe brought up to husbandry; his brother was by trade a blacksmith. We will close this short biographical paragraph with observing that the Rev. Osborn Littleton, of Buttermere, was, previous to his entry into orders, the best wrestler within many miles of Whitehaven.

We shall now proceed to notice a transaction which occasioned considerable interest among the admirers of this athletic exercise in this immediate vicinity, we mean the arrival of the Westmorland militia, which was stationed at Whitehaven towards the close of the seventeenth century. In this regiment were several celebrated wrestlers, among whom we will particularize two whose names became most familiar in men's mouths during the time the regiment remained at Whitehaven. These were Philip Stephenson and Thomas Madge. Philip was a strong-built muscular man, about five feet nine inches high, and must have weighed upwards of fourteen stones. His fame as a wrestler ran before him, his officers were ready to back him to any amount against any man in the kingdom, and in fact, during his residence here as a soldier, he certainly was the most prominent hero on the list. Philip was a straight stander, and extremely difficult to move from his position; and this more than any other qualification constituted his excellence as a wrestler. His great practice had rendered him nearly perfect in that point, and made him very quick in availing himself of any advantage that presented itself in consequence of the unsuccessful efforts made by his opponents. Madge on the contrary might be called a light weight, but was a most excellent outside striker. Among the neighbouring wrestlers who endeavoured to dispute the palm of superiority with these military champions, the Egremothians were the most conspicuous. The most noted of these were William Eilbeck, a stonemason, William Ponsonby, a butcher, and the two Roberts, Joe and Peter. Few likelier men than Eilbeck for a wrestler are to be found; he possessed length, strength, and weight; was confident of his own powers, and a good outside striker. Ponsonby

was the best and cleanest outside striker ever known in the west of Cumberland, and was by no means a little one, being not far from five feet ten inches high, and weighing near fourteen stones. Ponsonby much resembled Adam Dodd as a wrestler, and was unquestionably a very first-rater, but at that time was considered something on the decline. The Roberts were something less than Ponsonby, but Joe was considered nearly as dangerous a customer to get rid of, being extremely ready, and as well up to every manœuvre how to get the best of it, as any man in the kingdom. However, after various trials, the red coat proved the master. Intemperance had produced its usual effects upon Ponsonby, Eilbeck could not force Philip from his position, and the manœuvring of Roberts failed when opposed to the superior weight and tactics of the soldier. The only reverse the military experienced was at Saint Bees Moor, during the annual races. Stephenson's officers were somewhat noisy respecting his great capabilities, when a friendly wager was offered them to produce a man on the ground to wrestle him a single fall. The offer was immediately accepted, and Philip, eager to be at work, soon appeared in the ring fully prepared for action, and anxiously expecting his opponent. After waiting some time, Ponsonby, the man selected for the trial, entered to him, rather the worse, or probably the better, for the "water of life" which had been plentifully administered to him; but no solicitations could prevail upon him to strip. Fully satisfied that if he won the fall it must be without loss of time, he chose to decide the business with his clothes on. The quickness and impetuosity of Ponsonby's attack carried all before it. Notwithstanding the boasted guard of the soldier, his neck and shoulders instantly exchanged situations with his feet. Philip was up in a moment and anxious for another trial, but Ponsonby was not to be had, his friends had carried him off in triumph, and Philip was obliged to wait for another opportunity of balancing accounts with him. The last meeting between the Westmorland militia and the Egremothians was at Bigrigg Moor, a place nearly equidistant from

Whitehaven and Egremont; and this, we well remember, was the first prize we ever saw wrestled for. Philip had his revenge on Ponsonby, and finally threw Eilbeck, who in the course of the wrestling threw Madge. After the disbanding of the militia, Philip and Madge both returned to Whitehaven, where Madge was then employed as a top-man about the collieries. Stephenson likewise remained in the neighbourhood many years, and wrought at his trade, as a mason or waller. Philip often exhibited in the ring after his return, but the soldier Philip and the mason Philip seemed two very different persons. His most formidable traits were undoubtedly gone, and he was frequently thrown by men very far inferior to those he had before vanquished. He continued wrestling occasionally, till we who had regarded him with admiration when a mere lad, once or twice met him in the ring, when ranking higher on the list than any man he had previously encountered. The result need not be told, for such are the changes of a few years!

After the departure of the militia, the heroes of Egremont were not long in finding others eager to contest the palm of superiority with them even upon their own ground. It is probable they were becoming rather stale, but however that might be it was soon evident that they were no match for their new rivals from the neighbourhood of Cleator. These were John Blackstock and J. Wilkinson, both millers, from the border of the Holm, and the celebrated John Stainton, just then rising into notice. Wilkinson was a more powerful man than Blackstock, but the latter was considered a better wrestler. Blackstock was a well-made active man, about five feet nine inches high, and about thirteen stones in weight, and was one of the few who use the right buttock effectively. Stainton, however, soon became the star of the neighbourhood, and before he was twenty years of age had gained above that number of prizes, and though in his novitiate had been very seldom thrown. His fame and conquests increasing, he soon became the unrivalled champion of this vicinity, and was matched to wrestle five falls with any man in Cumberland. The hero

chosen to oppose him was Jacob Fletcher, from the neighbourhood of Mockerin, and the place fixed upon for this display of science was Arlecdon Moor, about four miles east of Whitehaven. The first trial proved long, and was severely contested. Each lifting against the other, neither of them could make anything like a stroke, and Fletcher frequently tried to ham without effect. After a desperate struggle, the holds getting looser, Fletcher succeeded in throwing his opponent over his buttock. Stainton won the second fall in good style, but Fletcher gained the remaining three falls successively, by buttocking him. This contest excited great interest at the time, and notwithstanding the result, much difference of opinion existed whether was the better man. It was urged by the friends of the loser, that owing to overworking himself while mowing, he had in a few days declined from upwards of fifteen stones to fourteen; and that he had the misfortune to break one of his great toes in the first contest. On the other hand, the friends of Fletcher asserted he was the heavier and stronger man, except in the arms, and that he was able to throw Stainton at any time. Both men were about six feet high, and the truth of the matter was, that strength was the most distinguished characteristic of the contest, and that very little science or good wrestling was displayed by either of the combatants. Stainton was a good lifter, and intent upon doing so, but never attempted an inside stroke, and knew nothing of buttocking; accordingly, when he was unable to take Fletcher from the ground, it could not fail to turn the scale against him. Fletcher was a more powerful man, but by no means so fair a stander; and we think, candidly speaking, it was to that circumstance as much as any other, the victory was to be attributed. His only stroke was inside with the right knee, which is certainly a very bad one to attempt when opposed to a man of equal power, but he was no contemptible hamer, and for so powerful a man, a good buttocker. After the wager was decided, there was some excellent wrestling for a belt, which was won by Henry Dixon, from the immediate neighbourhood, throwing Joseph Bushby, of Mockerkin,

a companion of Fletcher's, taller, and nearly of equal celebrity with him; the above four dons of their day were all husbandmen.

In pursuing the above progressive clue of wrestling, we have got within the limits of the eighteenth century, and are consequently approaching the great era of the Carlisle wrestling in 1809. Before commencing our account of these truly celebrated meetings, we will briefly notice a few transactions which involve the names of some wrestlers who never entered the Carlisle ring, and who were so well known as wrestlers, as to render our account somewhat imperfect without some notice of them.

For three or four successive years there were public bridals at Lorton, which occasioned the attendance of many celebrated wrestlers from different parts of the county. The first of these we will notice was in the year 1806; the last fall was disputed between Jacob Fletcher, of Mockerkin, and William Armstrong, of Tallentire. The latter was an excellent wrestler, but nearly three stones lighter than his opponent, and as many inches shorter. He was particularly good at striking inside with the left leg, and on this occasion was considered to have the best of the fall in question. Fletcher, however, refused to give it up, and in the course of the evening both parties agreed to decide the matter by another trial; when, after a well-contested struggle, the three great advantages of length, weight, and strength prevailed, and Fletcher was declared the conqueror. Fletcher was a very quiet and well-behaved man, and if not diversified in action, was so well versed in the science that we have heard him assert he was never vanquished in a number of trials, and never wrestled a disputed fall over again without winning it. In wrestling through the ring on that day, he threw that truly formidable character, Thomas Bell, for some time a schoolmaster at Bassenthwaite, and afterwards at Keswick. Bell at that period ranked higher as a wrestler, and we believe as a boxer, than any man in the two counties. In him were united all the qualifications which constitute a finished wrestler or pugilist. He possessed youth, length, strength, courage, activity, and

science, fully equal, if not superior, to any hero of that or any other time of modern date, and there is no doubt, if he had remained in the county, he would have shone as a star of the first magnitude. In the situation he then filled, he was considered a very good scholar, but at times, unfortunately for himself, he deviated from that propriety of conduct always expected from those in his situation. We have the greatest reason to believe he was the master of Richardson, of Caldbeck; then in his prime, and whom he resembled in his manner of wrestling, the inside being his favourite aim. Soon after the period alluded to, Bell emigrated to America, where, we have been informed he has succeeded in establishing himself comfortably. In this contest with Fletcher, whom at a previous period he had thrown with ease, he went down when making play. Of one or two succeeding trials which Fletcher acceded to for mutual accommodation, we cannot speak decisively. We have heard them very differently represented, some affirming Fletcher had not the least chance, and others, among whom may be enumerated Fletcher himself, maintain that he had none the worst of them.

In the following year, namely, 1807, no less than one hundred and twenty wrestlers from different parts of the county entered the ring to contend for a very handsome belt with plated buckles and sliders. The same William Armstrong who contested the last fall with Jacob Fletcher the preceding year, again distinguished himself on this occasion. He wrestled through the ring with much *eclat*, and though vanquished by us for the prize, he lost no laurels in that contest; contending for victory to the last, and though the advantages might certainly be considered against him, he was not disposed of without difficulty. This was the only time we ever wrestled or witnessed wrestling at Lorton, and the well-known John Brownrigg, of Patterdale, was the first man we threw. Brownrigg was acknowledged by all who knew him to be an excellent wrestler, and was more particularly known for being the conqueror of George Stamper, of Newlands, a very powerful man, and the only wrestler, we believe,

who ever vanquished both Thomas Nicholson and William Richardson without being at some future time defeated by them. Brownrigg was about the size of William Armstrong, and consequently, on encountering us, the advantages of length and strength were against him. This well-known wrestler died some time ago.

We will not dwell much upon the numerous meetings in this vicinity in which we ourselves played the first fiddle. We shall only observe, that in 1808, Blake Fell races, which had laid dormant for many years, were revived; and the weather proving favourable, they were well attended. Having carried off the prize with much ease the first day, a most determined opposition, often spoken of, was contrived against the ensuing day. The writer, with considerable adroitness, managed to call in against us, successively, no less than seven of the best wrestlers upon the ground, among whom were Joseph Bushby, of Mockerkin, and the two best of the younger Tinians, John and Joseph. Notwithstanding this deep-laid scheme, their opposition proved of no avail, as none of these selected champions appeared to have the least chance of arresting our career of victory. We have elsewhere observed that the best wrestling in the west of Cumberland was on Arlecdon Moor, where one, two, and sometimes three prizes were given every year, one of them, for a number of years, amounting to two guineas. On that Moor we were never thrown from the year 1805 to the year 1815, during which time we either won, or could have won, all the prizes, if we except one carrried off by William Mackereth, of Cockermouth, in 1814, for which we did not wrestle; therefore, how that event might have terminated can remain a matter of opinion only. However, independent of that circumstance, the multiplicity of our victories there sufficiently evince that, although we were sometimes thrown in the west of Cumberland, our being so was more owing to carelessness, or accident, than to any superiority, or even equality, of those who threw us. As the name of every other celebrated wrestler within the eighteenth century will occur, either in our review

of the wrestling at Ambleside, Carlisle, Penrith, or Keswick races, or in the biographical remarks on those who do, we will immediately proceed to the methodical consideration of them, with this preliminary observation, that the short memoirs annexed to some of the most celebrated will be found in that period of our review where every such wrestler has last entered any of the rings in question for the purpose of wrestling.

Previous to the year 1809 the wrestling in the vicinity of Ambleside, and throughout the lake circuit in general, was considered very inferior to that usually witnessed about Penrith, and the greatest part of Cumberland. It was, probably, through a laudable desire to remedy this deficiency, and to bring this manly exercise into more general estimation that J. Wilson, Esq., a gentleman then residing at Elleray, and who was extremly attached to many athletic amusements, through a conviction of their utility, by his own liberality and example promoted the donation of a larger sum of money to wrestle for at the annual sports near Ambleside in the year 1809, than had ever been known at any preceding period in that part of Westmorland. Among the competitors collected to contend for this liberal prize, was Thomas Nicholson, of Threlkeld, in Cumberland, then in the height of his provincial reputation. We say provincial, because it was previous to what might be termed his attainment of the comparative metropolitan stamp by his repeated victories at Carlisle. Nicholson was the winner of this prize, throwing a distinguished wrestler of the name of Dixon, and the two well known wrestlers, Rowland and John Long. It is, however, due to that impartiality which ought to be the invariable maxim of every historical writer to observe, that there were, and yet are, many in the vicinity of Ambleside that witnessed the contest who positively affirm he had no right to it. Their opinion is that he was thrown by J. Dixon (a brother to the Dixon he threw) a wrestler of no celebrity. It appears, however, that it had been the opinion of the stewards, that the fall in question was considered not fair, as they decided for another

trial. This, Dixon conscious of his inferiority' declined, and consequently Nicholson was declared the stander, and was the ultimate victor. Notwithstanding the magnitude of the prize, the competitors were not numerous, and the contests between Nicholson and the two Longs were considered the principal attraction of the day.

Influenced by the same motives which occasioned the above display at Ambleside, a much more considerable sum was, by the zeal and example of Mr. Henry Pearson, solicitor at Carlisle, collected to wrestle for during the races at that ancient city. Previous to this period, wrestling in the immediate vicinity of Carlisle was in no very great estimation; —it was seldom witnessed, and consequently could not be duly appreciated: and it was probably owing to this circumstance, that there was not any wrestler of celebrity, either in the city itself, or within some miles of it: therefore, notwithstanding the novelty of such an exhibition on the Swifts, and the very handsome sum subscribed, the competitors were not unusually numerous. Among these however, from what might be called west from Carlisle, were the celebrated Richardson, of Caldbeck, and Thomas Nicholson, of Threlkeld; and from the east, the equally distinguished Robert Rowantree, from the neighbourhood of Bewcastle, and the Earls, of Cumwhinton.

As some wagers were pending whether the prize would be carried east or west, it was deemed desirable that the best wrestlers on either side should not encounter each other till the close of the contest. Accordingly, in wrestling through the ring, Nicholson successively threw the eastern heroes above alluded to, and in consequence of some dispute arising respecting the fall between them, he threw Rowantree a second time with such ease as to convince the amateurs of his superiority over him. The same good fortune did not attend Richardson. He was thrown by a noted wrestler of the name of Harrison; and Harrison was the final opponent of Nicholson, who, by throwing him for the prize, was entitled to rank higher as a wrestler than any man in the county.

The gentlemen of Penrith, well aware of the universal satisfaction the revival of this truly British amusement had given to all ranks at Carlisle, determined to adopt the same means of increasing the popularity of the ensuing races at that town; and Dr. Pearson, brother to Mr. Pearson, of Carlisle, exerting himself in the business, it was attended with corresponding success. As Penrith was deemed a kind of central situation between Carlisle and Ambleside, and situate in a much more noted country for wrestling than either of them, the competitors for that prize were more numerous than at the other places. From Nicholson's previous success, the established character Richardson had long possessed, and the celebrity Harrison had acquired by throwing him at Carlisle, these three heroes were considered by the amateurs to stand the best chance for the prize. "'Tis not in mortals to command success," for however much they might deserve it, they were all thrown at the close of the third round; and the prize was won by a lad of the name of Golding, said to be only eighteeen years of age. The man whom Golding last threw was Paul Gedlin, from Culgaith, who, by all accounts, had at that time won as many prizes as Richardson himself, many more than Nicholson, and was as good a wrestler as either of them. Some time previous to this he had been matched to wrestle Richardson five falls, for five guineas aside, though more than a stone below his weight. The parties met according to appointment, but the wager was never determined, owing to some disagreement about the holds. Our accounts respecting this meeting do not coincide; some affirm that each man won a fall, and others that one fall only was wrestled, which was won by Richardson. However that might be, the fact was, that Gedlin was the better loose-hold wrestler, and Richardson was anxious for a tighter hold than he would allow to be fair; and on the other hand, Richardson did not choose to risk his reputation and his friend s money with a slack hold, against an adversary whom he knew he could throw with a light one. Gedlin was rather advanced in years when thrown by Golding, but was always considered a very su-

perior wrestler, and had won a great many prizes. In the course of the wrestling alluded to, he threw John Nicholson, brother to Tom, who had previously thrown Richardson on that occasion. Harrison, we believe, visited Liverpool soon after, and making one ring a very ostensible reason for never entering another in quest of athletic renown, we must here take our final leave of him. As for Golding, the very young and unexpected winner of this prize, although no doubt a very promising youth, and at that time heavier than Nicholson, yet it would be absurd to suppose he was an equal match for several of the competitors on that occasion. His most formidable point as a wrestler was a very vigorous assault outside with the left leg. A short time after this contest at Penrith, he wrestled against T. Nicholson for a belt; the result was what might naturally be expected from the celebrity of that hero. In the course of that, or the ensuing year, Golding removed to London, and distinguished himself for the annual prize given there during the Easter holidays, for the young men from Cumberland and Westmorland to wrestle for.

In the year 1810, the patrons of the Ambleside wrestling disseminated handbills all over the country to announce that a belt of considerble value, and five guineas, would be given to wrestle for at their annual sports at the head of Windermere Lake. The competitors, however, did not exceed sixteen couple, one half of whom were merely nominal. At this meeting we were present, as were Thomas and John Nicholson, and Joseph Slack, from Blencow; all, of course, from Cumberland. The Westmorland competitors were the same Nicholson had vanquished the preceding year, with the accession of Henry Chapman, a Bampton man, and Miles Dixon, a brother to the two already noticed in the year 1809. John Nicholson was thrown by Rowland Long, but both he and his brother were again thrown by T. Nicholson. Chapman was defeated both for the prize and a subsequent wager by Slack, who laid down to T. Nicholson; but on the other hand, Miles Dixon threw us, and finally Nicholson. The circumstance of Dixon throwing two of the very first Cumberland

wrestlers was certainly an unexpected one, although he was a stone heavier than either. Nicholson was no stranger to him, as they had had frequent trials together, and Dixon was consequently no stranger to his opponent's superiority; while Nicholson's knowledge of that fact in this instance contributed to his defeat by rendering him careless respecting his hold, as through his negligence in that point, Dixon took him from the ground, and twisted him down without a single struggle. As for ourselves, we contend that Dixon derived no honour from the result of the contest between us, as he had a firm hold of the waistband of the breeches during the whole time of the wrestle. Notwithstanding this incalculable advantage, the result was for some time extremely dubious. In short, we will aver that we had such manifest unfair play as reflected disgrace upon those who should have been the umpires on the occasion, as we several times desired him to quit his hold of our breeches, and do declare that, to the best of our belief, that circumstance alone prevented us from throwing him. After the victory was decided, both Dixon and his friends refused to accept of two guineas to one for a single trial only.

The great attraction of the Carlisle wrestling was this year fully manifested by a greater assemblage of people on the Swifts than was ever previously remembered. The Earl of Lonsdale gave five guineas to the eleven subscribed by the gentlemen of Carlisle. The first prize was again won by Nicholson, who likewise this year threw both Rowantree and John Earl. Richardson was thrown very unexpectedly by some person of no previous celebrity, but he won the second prize which was contested for by the sixteen last standers in great style, throwing at the last, Joseph Slack, who had likewise wrestled the last fall for the first prize. Being the last loser for both of these prizes, certainly was as creditable to Slack, as a wrestler, as if he had won one of them. Slack, though only about five feet eight inches high, was a heavier man than Nicholson, but Tom's length gave him such advantages that Slack never could do any thing with him. He was, however, justly entitled to the appellation of a first-rate

wrestler, and though not considered a match for Richardson, had thrown him more than once in the neighbourhood of Greystoke, at which place the late Duke of Norfolk frequently gave prizes, particularly buckskin breeches, to wrestle for. Slack was rather addicted to rambling, had won many prizes in different parts of the county, and continued to wrestle occasionally for many years after the period alluded to; but as we do not think he ever entered himself as a candidate for any capital prize afterwards, his name or exploits will not again occur in the subsequent part of this work.

The Ambleside wrestling in 1811 was, we believe, better attended than on either of the two preceding years. Miles Dixon did not wrestle, and therefore Nicholson, who was again present, had no opportunity of settling the last year's accounts with him. Tom, however, as early as the second round had to encounter a much more formidable opponent than ever Miles Dixon was, in the person of John Lowden, from the neighbourhood of Keswick. Lowden, although at that time scarcely at his best, was not on good terms with Tom, and on that account purposely threw himself against him; and it was not till after three successive and keenly contested trials had taken place that Nicholson got rid of this troublesome customer. Lowden was not satisfied with the different decisions. He, indeed, acknowledged that Tom won the last fall, but thought himself fully entitled to the first, the second being considered a dogfall. Tom in the next round threw Rowland Long, but was himself thrown by John Long in the fourth round. Long was now arrived near the end of his journey, but proved unable to reach it, being thrown by William Mackereth, a Cockermoth lad, then working at his business (a mason) with Nicholson, and on that account had accompanied him to the field of honour.

It is universally allowed that the ring at Carlisle this year could boast of a greater number of first-rate wrestlers than ever entered any other ring in the kingdom. Wrestling was now the acknowledged grand source of attraction at that place, and

all ranks seemed to coincide in the opinion, that it was entitled, in a national point of view, to take the lead of every other amusement. Even the worthy and respectable proprietor and editor of the *Cumberland Pacquet*, who scarcely ever noticed any athletic achievement in the ring, began to think the subject worthy of honourable mention, and we accordingly select the following paragraphs from that paper of the 2nd of October, 1811 :—

"Carlisle Wrestling.—On the first day of the races, 20 guineas were wrestled for on the Swifts, in a roped ring, sixty yards diameter. We never witnessed so fine an exhibition of agility and nerve, or a diversion that gave such universal satisfaction. The peaceable deportment of the different combatants cannot be too highly praised, as they submitted in all dubious falls, in the most implicit manner, to the decison of the umpire. The wrestling was most severely contested, in the presence of nearly 12,000 people, by some of the most sinewy and active youths, that we ever saw enter a ring. We observed amongst the spectators, the Marquis of Queensbury, the Earl of Lonsdale, Lord Lowther, Sir James Graham, of Netherby, Sir James Graham, of Kirkstone, Henry Fawcett, Esq., of Portland Place, together with a great concourse of other gentlemen. We understand the Lord Lieutenant expressed his most unqualified approbation of the diversion; and will annually give it his support, as long as there is not any riot or confusion, which we may venture to pledge ourselves, will never be the case, as the wrestlers are in general the sons of respectable yeoman and farmers, in this and the adjoining counties, and not like prize fighters, collected from the dregs of the people. Want of room prevents us giving the names of the different wrestlers; but we understand the first prize was won by Thoms Nicholson, of Threlkeld, near Keswick; who is esteemed one of the best thirteen stone wrestlers in the kingdom. John Richardson, of Staffield Hall, near Kirkoswald, gained the second prize, and is allowed by judges to be inferior to no man as a wrestler, being the favourite at setting to, but he did not wrestle with such luck, through the ring, for the first prize, as

the champion. He was thrown by one Robert Rowantree, from Bewcastle, in one of the severest struggles ever witnessed; both being fourteen stone wrestlers, they showed uncommon muscle when stripped, and Richardson was thrown by a half jirk of the hip, followed up by a sweeping cross-buttock. Sir James Graham, of Netherby, and Humphrey Senhouse, jun. Esq., of Netherhall, subscribed five guineas, and Lord Lowther and Henry Fawcett, Esq., each two guineas, towards this athletic diversion, so much excelled in by our forefathers."

In respect to Nicholson's wrestling through the ring this third successive year of unequalled triumph, we must be allowed to observe, that though entitled to every credit, his progress was more smooth than he could possibly have anticipated. His first fall was gained under such circumstances as not to entitle it to the appellation of a wrestle. Watson who had thrown Rowland Long the first round, laid down to him in the second. In the third he threw Jordan, a well-known wrestler from the east of Penrith. In the fourth, W. Earl. In the fifth he accommodated matters with Douglas, a very likely man and just in his prime, from Caldbeck; and in the sixth threw his old opponent John Earl. We will in this place briefly notice some of the most noted men who will not again come under our consideration. The John Richardson alluded to in the above quotation was certainly a very celebrated wrestler, and we have heard, had once an intention of advertising himself to wrestle any man in the kingdom. Wrestling, it is to be observed, is extremely different from boxing in respect to such challenges. A wrestler stakes a trifling sum of money on the qualifications he naturally possesses, and the science he has acquired, that he cannot be excelled in what he himself has pursued, and what the world in general regards as an amusement; on the other hand, pugilism is a profession, and on the good or bad success of a contest, depends the comfort, and sometimes the subsistance of the pugilist and his family. Being present we can vouch for the accuracy of this hero being the favourite for the first prize, and some were even so confident of his capabilities as to take him

against the field; this partiality we presume was more owing to his education and connexions being superior to those of wrestlers in general, than to his individual merit as a wrestler. We admit that his requisites entitled him to stand on equal grounds with any other competitor, but against such a field was indeed an overwhelming preference. With his celebrated namesake from Caldbeck we believe he had never contended, and with Nicholson only once. It is true on that occasion the fall was given in his favour, but he was not on fair grounds entitled to it, it was a complete snap in every sense of the word, but Kirkoswald being the scene of action, his friends were averse to his giving Nicholson another chance, otherwise we are informed, that he had no objections to wrestling over, and was very ready to admit that he did snap. He was in our opinion as likely a man for wrestling as we ever saw, being upwards of fourteen stone weight, and six feet three inches high; he generally struck outside with his right foot, and followed it up if occasion required with his left side. He did not at Carlisle, though the winner of the second prize, fall in with any that could be considered an equal opponent except Rowantree; but he wrestled an extra fall for two guineas with a man of the name of Armstrong, but better known by the appellation of solid oak, who was upwards of six feet high, and without appearing particularly fleshy, or corpulent, weighed eighteen stones. In this contest Richardson on making play, appeared to recoil and go down from, if we may so express it, the solidity of his opponent, who was, without exception considered the strongest man in the north of England. Richardson probably did not rightly consider this, and so became the victim of his own temerity, otherwise the result ought to have been different, as oak had been thrown by Rowantree, and that hero, though the conqueror of Richardson on this occasion, did not rank so high in the estimation of those, who from an equal knowledge of both the men and the exercise, might be considered competent judges of their comparative merits.

As this was the last year in which John and William Earl acted a distinguished part in the Carlisle

wrestling, it is but justice to remark that they both, particularly the former, greatly contributed to render the exercise worthy of the patronage it received. They were about thirteen stone men, and had gained a great many prizes. When the Carlisle wrestling commenced, John had a family, and was past that time of life in which men in general get out of practice, and often decline wrestling. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, Nicholson was the only man of his weight who appeared equal to him as a wrestler, for he this year threw Scott twice, who gained the prize the succeeding year, and who had previously thrown Richardson of Caldbeck. He was particularly noted for slipping from his side or breast, and consequently partial to loose holds.

This was likewise the last year in which Nicholson himself ever entered a ring to contend for a prize. The circumstance of Tom carrying away the prize for three successive years will best speak his merits as a wrestler. He did not want half an inch of six feet, and generally weighed about twelve stone and eight pounds. Boxiana remarks, "The great similarity of Jem Belcher's portrait to a most distinguished hero on the Continent (Bonaparte) is truly curious;" the likeness, however, of the former distinguished pugilist to Tom Nicholson is much more so, as the former likeness must have been confined to the head and face, while in the latter it is preserved through the whole frame, as there was not one quarter of an inch difference between their height nor as far as we can judge, a single pound in their weight; both weighing from twelve stone six pounds, to thirteen stones. Nor was this resemblance in person, though certainly very remarkable, more so than the similarity visible in the different contests in which they were engaged. We have heard Nicholson assert that he was as good a man before he was twenty years of age, as at any succeeding period, this was exactly the case with Belcher, who was at the same age open to all England. If an amusement like wrestling can entitle any of its professors to the appellation of champion, the victor at Carlisle for three successive years had certainly a better claim to the title than any other man, and it

is well known Belcher was for some years considered the champion of England. In the great essentials necessary for acquiring that enviable distinction, the similarity was equally striking. The same cool and undaunted courage, and the same varied and effective action were conspicuous in both, and if Jem's propriety when fighting "might be deemed a model for pugilists in general," it is but justice to remark, that a fairer wrestler than Tom never entered a ring; and sorry are we that Jem did not, like Tom, take his leave of the ring when in possession of the great renown he had acquired.

It may not be thought improper in this short account of Thomas Nicholson, to make some allusion to the pugilistic contest in which he was engaged in the year 1814, during the races at Carlisle. We have the highest authority for saying, that when Tom left home for Carlisle, he knew nothing of the match in question; and that the behaviour of Ridley, who was on the look-out for him, and the wishes expressed by some amateurs to witness a trial of skill between them, made Tom erroneously think his character was at stake, and that he could not decline the contest without incurring the charge of having a white feather in him. We say erroneously, because we think by his consenting to fight to oblige any man, or set of men whatever, he deviated from that manly independence of character he wished to preserve; and sullied the renown he had acquired as a free and first-rate wrestler, by becoming so much the slave of others, as to subject himself to the certain degradation of being considered as a minor pugilist, by fighting such a blackguard as Ridley was universally known to be. In the battle itself, Tom likewise suffered the opinion of others to influence his own judgment till he had received more beating than would have satisfied a tolerably game man; yet even then, notwithstanding the superior weight and practice of Ridley, the resources Tom possessed in his science as a wrestler, joined to his natural discrimination and fortitude when acting upon his accustomed manner of boxing, enabled him to bring the contest to such a state as clearly evinced what would have been the result if he had

adopted that line of conduct at the commencement of the battle. Respecting the termination of that contest, it is the opinion of many who witnessed it, and whose judgment we think cannot be questioned, that Tom was the fresher man when the combatants were separated, and that the severe falls Ridley constantly received, must soon have rendered him unable to meet his opponent at the scratch. Whatever different opinions might be entertained respecting the science displayed during the contest, it was unanimously admitted that the courage and bottom exhibited by both, were never excelled by any pugilists in the kingdom. Tom, we believe, is not yet thirty eight years of age.

As this was the only time the celebrated Henry Graham, of Brigham, ever entered the Carlisle ring, we cannot notice his exploits in a more proper place, though he continued a most distinguished wrestler for many years after. Harry has wrestled more matches than any other man in the county, and several of his opponents have always been considered as first-rate wrestlers as ever peeled in a ring; when we mention the names of Thomas Nicholson, William Richardson, and inform the reader, that to these two he may add our own, the truth of that assertion will not be disputed. Previous to this visit to Carlisle, Harry had won many prizes, and ranked very high as a wrestler, but being then in his very prime (we suppose about twenty two years of age) it was his own opinion, as well as that of his friends, that he was a competent match for any wrestler whatever. This opinion was by no means rashly grounded, when it is considered that though only about five feet nine inches high, he weighed between thirteen and fourteen stones, possessed unrivalled activity, had been a wrestler from a boy, and was then in full practice. At this meeting, having thrown a wrestler of some celebrity in the first round, Harry, in the second, came against John Jordan a noted wrestler from the Penrith side. On what account he was obliged to give Jordan a second chance, we cannot possibly determine, as Harry threw him so fair the first fall, that he himself never went to the ground. We believe the

truth is, that sport, more than fair play, was the object of those assistant umpires who were within the ring; and such was the confusion, that J. Boadle, a good wrestler who had accompanied Graham, after winning his first fall was never again called upon. However that may be, Jordan won the second fall, and Harry was crossed out. Feeling dissatisfied at the usage he had experienced, Harry expressed a wish on the following day to try a few falls with any wrestler then at Carlisle. This being repeated to the Champion Nicholson, Tom offered to stake three to two on himself for the best of five falls, which offer was immediately accepted. It was then about eleven o'clock, and a meadow in Caldewgate at five, was the place and time appointed for determining the wager. Both parties were true to the appointment, and no time was lost in proceeding to action. The first and second falls were similarly contested, and terminated in the same manner. Harry, eager to be at work, instantly made play; the superior length of Tom enabled him to defend himself by lifting against his opponent, and he lost no time in returning the assault by hankering his heel. Notwithstanding the activity of Harry, he could not in either of these instances resist the consequences resulting from this favourite mode of Tom's, in which he certainly excelled all the wrestlers we ever knew, and both the falls were immediately conceded to Nicholson. The third fall was contested in nearly a similar manner, but the termination was different. Harry, on finding his heel again hooked, immediately turned his body round with such rapidity as to bring Tom all but underneath him in the fall. Tom insisted it was a dog fall, while Harry claimed it, in which he was supported by his friends, and in which opinion the spectators in general coincided. However, being left to us, we decided it was not fair. In this place we will remark that it has been maintained by Tom's friends, that it was a drunken business altogether on his part; this story is utterly false. Tom was apparently as sober when the wager was made as any man on the Swifts; on meeting in Caldewgate, he remarked to us that a pint, or glass of ale, then

before him, of which he had drank about one third, was the only one he had tasted since he had made the wager; and on winning the two first falls he jocularly remarked "that Graham, though a good wrestler, was far too fond of making play; and that if Harry gave him more time, he himself was no bad one in that respect;" besides, could any drunken man have thrown such a wrestler as Graham was, twice successively? In the fourth trial Tom made play, which Harry warded off with much skill, and gave Tom a convincing proof of his quality by striking him fairly down. The fifth fall was exactly similar to the third, and being so decided by us, the business was for some time suspended, as Harry's friends insisted that he had won; however, on Tom's offering to strike even, and begin again, it was acceded to, and the contest was instantly renewed. It is unnecessary to dwell on the ensuing falls. Suffice it to observe, they were well contested, both displaying great action and science. Harry won the first, Tom the second, and Harry the third and fourth; no dispute occurred, and Tom acknowledged defeat by paying his money cheerfully.

We will now briefly give the reader our candid opinion of the foregoing contest in which Harry acquired so many laurels. Neither of them we believe spent the preceding evening in the most sober or prudential manner; and probably Tom's more extensive acquaintance, joined to the circumstance of his winning the prize, might have rendered him the less fit for such a contest. Tom felt anxious for another trial, and how that would have terminated, can now only be guessed at. Admitting that we think the knowledge nine falls must have given them of each other was not in Tom's favour, as Harry had become perfectly awake to his favourite method, and that Harry evidently gained ground as the contest advanced; still we do think Tom was the better wrestler, and would have thrown more men than Harry ever could. As our reasons for this would occupy a much greater portion of our remaining pages than we can possibly spare, we are compelled thus abruptly to take leave of the subject.

The great fame Harry acquired by this conquest, satisfied his friends that he was a match for any man in the kingdom; and our refusal to acquiesce in that opinion, occasioned an agreement to wrestle him within one month of his contest with Nicholson, for the greatest sum we ever knew wrestled for, either in Cumberland or Westmorland. At the time of making this wager, nothing was farther from our intention than wrestling Harry or any other person, as we had been unwell for some time, though we had been at Carlisle, where we were thrown, after a smartish contest, by Joseph Bird, or Holme Wrangle, a wrestler highly noted in that part of the county. The preceding year we had thrown Harry at Arlecdon with such ease, that we believe three or four to one would then have been against him for a single fall; and a meeting between us for a number falls, would have been thought ridiculous. But now the case was totally altered; through extreme illness we were obliged to solicit at least a respite of our engagement. This was not granted; and, as six guineas were deposited, we chose to appear rather than forfeit. The sum contended for was sixty guineas, and the number of falls wrestled was eleven. No wrestler ever entered a ring in higher condition, or with greater confidence than Harry, and his gaining the three first falls could not fail to increase the good opinion of his friends, as nothing but a most decisive victory could then be contemplated. But the loss of three falls, instead of depressing, only roused our energies; the listlessness which pervaded the whole frame at the commencement of the contest now gave place to that animated feeling arising from exercise, and the situation in which we were then placed; and instead of the expected victory, Harry was somewhat obligated to fortune for one fall out of the other eight? Harry was some pounds the heavier man, but the advantages of length and strength were so much against him, that in the latter part of the contest, it is well known he had not the slightest chance whatever. This contest took place on Arlecdon Moor, on the 26th of October, 1811.

The following year Harry was worsted at Cockermouth, by John Fidler of Wythop Hall, a stronger and heavier man than himself, and considered as a first-rate wrestler. Fidler had not much catch at Harry, whom he had accompanied at Arlecdon races in 1810, where we threw them both for the prize. Harry continued wrestling up to the year 1822, during which time he gained many prizes, and we believe was never afterwards defeated in a match; however the following circumstance is all that we can notice in this work.

William Richardson being at Cockermouth previous to his winning the prize at Carlisle in 1821, accidentally fell in with Harry, and some words passing between them respecting wrestling, a challenge for a trifling wager, to be decided immediately, was the consequence. Harry at this time was so increased in flesh as to weigh nearly sixteen stones, but notwithstanding this disadvantage, he obtained an easy victory. It is alleged by some that Richardson was not in a proper state to wrestle at that time; this is as strenuously denied by others. We cannot say how the matter really was, but we are correct in saying that Richardson acknowledged defeat in three trials, and that Harry could have been backed to wrestle him for any wager he thought proper, at that, or any other time.

Very few (if any) Cumberland wrestlers attended the Ambleside sports in 1812. Miles Dixon, and a butcher in Ambleside, were the two last standers, and it being agreed between them that the latter should be the ostensible winner of the prize, they agreed to wrestle two or three falls for the gratification of those gentlemen who had subscribed towards the wrestling; and in this friendly trial Miles Dixon was victorious. This champion, though we believe not an equal match for some of the Cumberland men of his day, seems to have been entitled to rank as the most renowned hero in that part of Westmorland. About this, and the succeeding time, John Long seems to have been considered superior to his brother Rowland. The latter visited Carlisle in 1811, but notwithstanding his uncommon powers, being both a very tall and heavy man, he was not so

fortunate as to gain a single fall. Rowland is a wrestler of nearly 30 years standing, and must during that time have contended with a number of good men. It is said he is extremely anxious to make the prizes he has gained up to one hundred, as he is only two or three short of that number; but from his increasing years, and corresponding numbness, it is a great chance whether he will ever succeed in doing so. This was the last year in which any considerable sum was given at Ambleside. The gentleman who so actively patronised it, returned to Edinburgh. The intention of making it a meeting of much notoriety seems to have completely failed, as the wrestling there was never at all equal to that witnessed at Carlisle and Keswick.

In 1812, the first prize at Carlisle was won by J. Scott, of Canobie, throwing at the last William Richardson, of Caldbeck, whom he had thrown in the course of the wrestling the preceding year. Scott though shorter by three inches than Nicholson, was we believe the heavier man. His being the third stander in 1811, and the conqueror in 1812, is sufficient to stamp him as a very excellent wrestler, though he had not successively vanquished such a hero as Richardson. This was the only year William Mackereth attended the Carlisle wrestling. His being considered a pupil of Nicholson's and the victor at Ambleside in 1811, much was expected from him. He was thrown very unexpectedly in the first round, but being chosen in for the second prize, he acquitted himself to the perfect satisfaction of the amateurs, being one of the three last standers, and the contest between him and William Richardson, who threw him, is spoken of as one of the best ever witnessed on the Swifts. Mackereth, in person, greatly resembles Jack Carter the pugilist, but is a much stronger man than Carter. In addition to the above exploits, he won the prize at Arlecdon the succeeding year, throwing at the last Robert Selkirk, for some time considered the leading wrestler between that place and Duddon.

At Penrith, this year, where the wrestling had, owing to various circumstances, dwindled so as to excite no comparative interest with that at Carlisle,

the prize was won by John Slee, of Dacre, who, as an outside striker with the left knee, excelled any other wrestler at that time. Among those whom he threw on this occasion, were James Robinson, and the person who threw Wm. Dickinson, the two men who alternately gained the prize at Carlisle the ensuing years.

In 1813, Robert Rowantree, so often mentioned as a distinguished wrestler in the course of this work, gained the first prize. It was singular that Richardson was again the last loser and the winner of the second prize. Rowantree was six feet high, and a very muscular man; attached to loose holds, an excellent cross buttocker, and an extremely awkward customer to get at. He had as a wrestler largely contributed to the celebrity of the Carlisle wrestling since its institution; but now, fully satisfied with the laurels he had honourably acquired, he took his leave of that, and for anything we know, of every other ring.

The prize at Carlisle in 1814 was won by William Dickinson, from Alston Moor, who weighed from thirteen, to fourteen stones, and was about five feet ten inches high. Dickinson had wrestled both at Carlisle and Penrith the preceding year, and was much noticed. He was justly considered a first-rate wrestler, and his attendance was expected the ensuing year; but Dickinson, it appears, had other prospects; he married, and things not falling out according to his expectation, he emigrated to America. The last person he threw for the prize was George Dennison, the successor of that highly reputed bone setter, Benjamin Taylor. Dennison, in addition to coming last for the first prize, won the second, and his exploits in the ring on this occasion, afforded great satisfaction to the attendant gentlemen. The fall between him and Dickinson was rather a singular one. Dennison threw in his left side with much force, intending to buttock his opponent; Dickinson left go, and Dennison, disappointed of his object, staggered forward a considerable distance but could not save himself from going down on his hands, otherwise he would have won the fall, as he had preserved his hold.

In 1815 the prize at Carlisle was borne away by James Robinson, one of the Earl of Lonsdale's game-keepers at Lowther Castle. The last stander was William Slee, brother to John Slee, whom we have noticed as the victor at Penrith in 1813. Robinson was a fourteen stone man, and Slee not thirteen, and both coming from the neighbourhood of Penrith, Slee, probably conscious that the chance was against him, agreed to lie down, and there is no doubt he was well paid for it. This mode of proceeding was highly censured by many sincere friends to the exercise, but in fact, it was only following up the precedent allowed to Nicholson and Douglas in 1811. In wrestling over for the second prize, Slee was thrown the first round, and the last standers were Thomas Todd, of Alston, and the youngest of three brothers of the name of Foster, all of whom wrestled this year, and acquired great celebrity by throwing several good wrestlers. Todd and Foster could not agree about the hold, and consequently never wrestled; but on dividing the money, we have been informed that Todd received more than his opponent, it being the opinion of the umpire that he was the fairer stander.

In 1816 Todd was one of the two last standers for the first prize, but who had a right to be the other, is somewhat difficult to determine. Being a spectator that year, we do not hesitate to say that the conduct of the umpires was extremely blameable. In the course of the wrestling, a fall between Thomas Richardson, of Hesket, and Joseph Graham, from Ravenglass, was given to the former. We assert that Graham was not allowed a fair hold, that it was a manifest snap, and that after all it was a complete dogfall. On wrestling when there were but four standers, Richardson was indisputably thrown; but such was the gross partiality shewn towards him, that he was allowed to compound with the person who threw him. Having thus become the other last stander, it appeared that he had agreed with Todd to divide the money between them, but the point of honour had not been settled whether was to be the ostensible victor; accordingly they would not make a wrestle of it, and notwithstanding the

precedents before alluded to, Mr. Pearson very properly withheld the money. The proprietor of the circus, awake to his own interest, gave a silver cup to wrestle for the next day. The sum demanded for admittance was not great, but the receipts far overbalanced the value of the cup, which was won by John Lowden, from Keswick. The last loser was Andrew Armstrong, from Sowerby Hall, an excellent wrestler, who weighed between twelve and thirteen stones, but not an equal match for Lowden, who was nearly a stone heavier. Lowden was a very cross stander, and as difficult to dispose of as any wrestler within the last century. We have noticed the contest between him and Nicholson at Ambleside in another place. That contest took place before Lowden was at his best, and being the last year of Nicholson's wrestling, he never threw that hero in a ring, but in the list of those he afterwards threw, the names of Richardson, Mackereth, Graham, and many others, might be enumerated; with us he was not so fortunate, as we threw him at Arlecdon in the year 1813, when in his prime.

The disputes respecting the wrestling in 1816 caused its suspension in 1817, but the proprietor of the circus again ventured to speculate on the celebrity of the exercise, by giving two or three prizes. These were won by John M'Laughlan, (commonly called Clatten) and John Liddle, both from the vicinity of Dovenby. Laughlan threw Liddle at the last for the first prize, and laid down to him for the second, he likewise threw Todd and Robinson, neither of them being able to do anything with him, on account of his tremendous size.

As the wrestling at Carlisle races continued suspended till the year 1821, we must now revert to that at Keswick, which in 1818 was patronised in a very liberal manner, and has continued augmenting to the present time. The prize that year was won by Thomas Richardson, of Hesket, throwing at the last the celebrated William Wilson, of Ambleside. In 1819 it was won by Andrew Armstrong, of Sowerby Hall. In 1820, it was won by William Wilson, of Ambleside, whose last opponent was William Richardson, of Caldbeck. In 1821, so

rapidly had wrestling increased in the estimation o all ranks, that it was found the attendance at th races, was in a great measure governed by it; anc the subscriptions proportionably increasing, it was extended to three days, the winner on the first day, being debarred on the second. Notwithstanding a very numerous field of wrestlers, the first prize was won by Richard Abbot, a schoolmaster from Whitehall, who weighed very little more than eleven stones. Neither could it be considered that Abbot fell fortunately when wrestling through the ring, his four last opponents being A. Armstrong, J. Frears, T. Richardson, and T. Lock, all of them good wrestlers, and averaging two stones above his weight. Two of these four it will be recollected had likewise been previously victors at Keswick, and had distinguished themselves at Carlisle. Frears and Lock were from the vicinity of Whitehaven, and both well known as wrestlers; the latter on this occasion greatly distinguished himself, throwing both Edward Hawel, a very noted wrestler, and the truly celebrated J. Lowden, who, though married, took a fancy to enter the ring, and was the third stander. The second prize was won by James Graham, then residing in Bassenthwaite, a very likely man for excelling as a wrestler; standing above six feet, and weighing fourteen stones. We are very sorry our limits will not permit a more lengthy detail of this celebrated meeting.

The great falling off in the attendance of all ranks at Carlisle races since the suspension of the wrestling occasioned its revival this year; and it could boast among the numerous spectators assembled to witness it, many of the most distinguished characters in this and the adjacent counties; nay, such was its attraction, that the gentler sex, as in the days of auld lang syne, deigned to regard it as an exercise worthy of Englishmen to practise, and as an amusement which false delicacy, or predetermined prejudice only could discover anything so indecorous as to prevent Englishwomen from sanctioning it with their presence. The first prize on this memorable day was won by William Richardson, of Caldbeck; and the second by John Weightman, a hero who had during

the two preceding years risen to the top of the tree in the vicinity of Carlisle. The last opponent of Weightman was Joseph Abbot, from the vicinity of Penrith, a very celebrated wrestler, who likewise highly distinguished himself at Penrith races this year, where there were evident symptoms of this athletic exercise again becoming an object worthy of encouragement. Thomas Ford who acquired great celebrity at this meeting by throwing Weightman, and contesting the last fall with Richardson, has generally resided within a few miles of Egremont. He was thrown by Weightman for the second prize, but appeared to be no unequal competitor for him; being six feet two inches high, and weighing upwards of fourteen stones. To say the least of Ford, he was much noticed by the spectators for his manly exertions, and the alacrity and cheerfulness with which he always met his man. James Graham before alluded to, was likewise considered to stand on very high ground though thrown by Weightman for both prizes.

As for the victor, W. Richardson, whom we have so often had occasion to allude to, this might very justly be considered an excellent tie up for him, as he was stated in the newspapers of the day, to be forty-five years of age! and the winner of 240 belts!! We cannot decisively contradict either statement, but as far as we can judge they are both rather exaggerated. We never met Richardson in a ring but once, and that was during our novitiate. Richardson was in his prime, and we well remember he then called himself about twenty-three years of age; we were turned of eighteen, therefore if he spoke correctly, he could not be more than forty-one at the time he won this prize. Richardson might be about five feet nine inches in height, and would weigh from thirteen to fourteen stones. Being a wrestler of twenty-five years standing, and for a long time open to any man, he has wrestled more, and gained a greater number of prizes, than any other man ever did. His favourite method was the inside, and he seems to have been (like Achilles) the most vulnerable in the heel. It was by catching his heel that Scott threw him two successive years, and by which

J. Nicholson (brother to Tom) threw him at different times; and yet neither of them, though excellent wrestlers, ought to have stood any chance with him. We are likewise well informed, that in his casual trials with T. Nicholson, he not unfrequently barred that favourite finish off of that hero's, which was a kind of acknowledgment of his inferiority. We do not credit the assertions of his friends in regard to his being Tom's master, our opinion is, that he was not: and notwithstanding Tom was a stone the lighter man, the fact of his repeatedly throwing the very men who have thrown Richardson, as Rowantree, Harrison, and Lowden, and the great reasons there are to believe, that such men as his brother John, and Scott, could never have thrown him, justify us in asserting Tom was the better wrestler, and more capable of wrestling through rings than Will was, although the latter was always considered a more pains-taking wrestler. Many of Richardson's friends assert, and among them are some well qualified to judge, that he was the fairest stander, and best wrestler of his time; while those rather hostile to him, contend, that he was a sulky (which is tantamount to an unfair) stander, and was as much indebted to that, and his tremendous strength of arm, as to his science. For our part we have no reason to applaud or condemn; we do not think any of our readers will deem us incapable of forming an opinion, and we assure them it is a free and unprejudiced one. We have not the least doubt but that he was for a number, or even for one fall, a competent match for any man in the kingdom for very many years. For us to endeavour to particularize his conquests would be absurd; and we have noticed his occasional defeats for the purpose of reflecting lustre on those who threw such a hero, and not by any means to detract from the great and well merited renown he universally possessed.

We come now to the Koswick wrestling in 1822. The first prize was won by John Liddle, of Blind Bothel, throwing at the last William Cass, of Loweswater; and the second by Jonathan Watson, of Torpenhow. Weightman, who was the favourite, was thrown by Cass for the first prize, and Watson threw

him the last fall for the second. Watson likewise threw J. Richardson, T. Lock, J. Graham, and T. Tordiff. Watson had before thrown Weightman in the course of the year, at Micklethwaite, and W. Richardson, at, or near Caldbeck: these conquests we think entitle him to rank very high as a wrestler. He is about five feet eight inches high, and near thirteen stone weight; is considered an excellent ground wrestler, and is by trade a shoemaker. Notwithstanding Watson gained the second prize, he was thrown in the first round for the first, by William Wilson, of Ambleside, undoubtedly the best wrestler Westmorland ever produced; and it is the confirmed opinion of very many whose judgment is entitled to every consideration, that at the time he won at Keswick, he was the master of any man in the kingdom. It is certain that upon that occasion Richardson had not the shadow of a chance with him, and the preceding year he gave a convincing proof of his powers by striking J. Laughlan down in such a manner as we are convinced no other man in the kingdom could have done. When thrown by Weightman he was labouring under an asthmatic complaint, otherwise he ought to have been in his very prime. He stands near six feet four inches high, and weighed, when in good health, about fifteen stones.

We come now to the consideration of the Carlisle wrestling in 1822. The first prize was won by W. Cass, and the second by John Weightman. As those who wrestled may yet be considered in possession of the ring, that circumstance must of course circumscribe our account of them. Cass is not far from six feet high, and weighs sixteen stones. The action he displays is an outside stroke with his left foot, but its fatality consists in the swing, or twist, with which it is accompanied, and his method of parting with his men. He was not much noticed previous to his throwing Weightman; but in our opinion he will, and is the only man who ought to throw him again. Cass is equally as strong, fully as heavy, and Weightman will find it difficult to improve his hold, and command him as he does all his other opponents. Cass certainly won very cleverly,

and though we must admit he wrestled fortunately through the ring, we think him the likeliest person to win again. The redoubted Weightman is above six feet three inches high, and weighs upwards of fifteen stones. Weightman has certainly a very good natured, and indeed we might with truth say, a prepossessing appearance. The whole science he appears master of is the address he displays in the application of his tremendous strength in breaking his adversary's, and improving his own hold. He appears to be master of Liddle, and in the match between him and Richardson, the latter certainly had no chance with him. Respecting his behaviour towards the spectators on that occasion, we will remark that there is a very material difference between wrestling a private match, and contending for a public prize. The latter is expressly for the amusement of the spectators, and they have a right, as in a tneatre, to express in a certain degree, their opinion of the conduct of the performers; but with the former they have no right whatever, excepting to preserve fair-play between the men; and when it is well known that this was neither the second nor third instance in which matches with Richardson never were decided, we have room to infer that the fault in taking hold might not be all Weightman's. The grand question now is, is there one man in the present list who can throw him a main? Our opinion is, if there be one, there are not two. John Liddle, the victor at Keswick, and from whom much was anticipated at Carlisle, is upwards of fourteen stones, and about five feet ten inches high. It is scarcely fair to make lengthy remarks upon those who may again appear in the ring, therefore we shall only observe, that with one exception, there is no wrestler of, or under his own weight at present that can throw him. James Graham had for some time been labouring under a bad state of health, and in appearance, as well as powers, had evidently declined. We likewise think that T. Richardson cannot be what he has been. As a hiper, he is certainly the quickest and best on the list. He is taller, but not so heavy as Liddle; and though we do not think him a T. Nicholson, yet very few at

present are an equal match for him. John Fearon, who threw Weightman at Carlisle, is about the same height, but heavier than that hero. The fame of Weightman was his principal inducement for entering that ring, and by throwing him he accomplished his object. Respecting the contest between them, it was a bad one, and Weightman lost the fall at a time when he ought to have been certain of winning it. John M'Laughlan, the fourth stander on that occasion, is near six feet six inches high, and at present weighs about seventeen stones. Had he been in practice and taken more pains in procuring an equal hold, Weightman ought not to have thrown him; as though not excelling in action, he is by no means deficient in science. Having been some years married previous to his present settlement in Whitehaven as a publican, his practice must have been latterly very confined, otherwise he ought, and we think, would have been the present champion. Weight and age considered, no wrestler more distinguished himself at Carlisle than Robert Waters, the third stander. He appeared a little one, is a very young one, and gave most convincing proofs of his science and quickness, the two great essentials which constitute a finished wrestler. T. Todd, the last loser, is full five feet ten inches high, and weighs twelve stones and four pounds. Putting hearsay out of the question, and giving our opinion of what we have personally witnessed, Todd is the best and most finished wrestler we ever saw. He has not the power of Nicholson, but excepting him, we never saw a thirteen, nor is there at present any fourteen stone man, in our opinion, able to throw him the best of three, or five falls. The prize given for lads afforded much amusement, and many of them displayed infinite science, and seemed quite at home in the ring. The two last, though not the tallest, or heaviest, among the competitors, were both we were told, above the age specified in the advertisement.

In concluding this treatise, we will briefly remark there are, and were, some excellent wrestlers in the eastern part of this county, with whose names and

per time for noticing them. As for the present heroes, our circumscribed limits, and the recollection that we have freely criticised the exploits of those only, who may be considered to have taken their leave of the ring, will, we hope, prove a sufficient apology for our brief notice of them. Of the performance itself, we will only observe, that the disadvantages invariably connected with any original work must plead in extenuation of its most glaring defects. At any rate, it may serve as a kind of data, or landmark, to those who may feel disposed to sail in that tract, where its precedence must be allowed to have broken the ice.

THE END.

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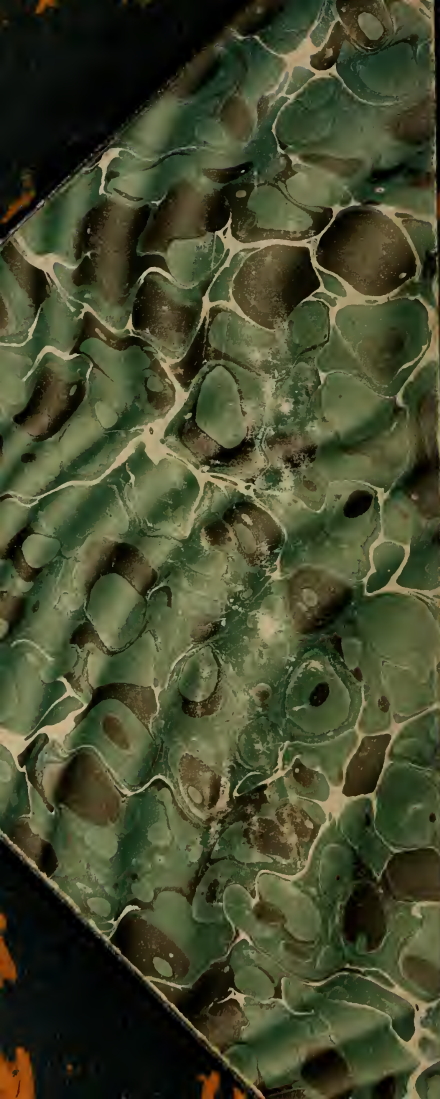
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